A Saint Indeed OR THE GREAT WORK OF A Christian Opened and Pressed;

From *Prov.* 4. 23.

BEING

A Seasonable and Proper Expedient for the Recovery of the much decayed Power of Godliness among the Professors of these times.

By *John Flavell*, Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON,

Printed for *T. Parkhurst* at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapside*, and *D. Newman* at the *Kings-Arms* in the *Poultrey*, 1684.

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Epiſtle Dedicatory.

To my dearly beloved and longed for, the Flock of Jeſus Chriſt in *Dartmouth*, over whom the Holy Ghoſt hath made me an Overſeer: ſound Judgment, true Zeal, and unſtained Purity is heartily wiſhed.

My dear Friends,

THere are three ſad ſights with which our eyes ſhall continually affect our hearts. The (1.) *Is to behold in every place, ſo many prophane dad diſſolute ones, who bear the very image of Satan: the face of whoſe converſation plainly diſcovers what they are, and whither they are going*, Philip. 3. 18, 19. *Theſe look like themſelves, the children of wrath. The* (2.) *Is to ſee ſo many curſed Hypocrites artificially diſguiſing themſelves, and with marvellous dexterity acting the parts of*

Saints, so that even a judicious eye may sometimes mistake the Similer workings *of the Spirit on them for his* Saving *working on others: to hear such a person conferring, praying, bewailing his corruptions, and talking of his experiences, would easily persuade a man to believe, that he hath the heart as well as the face of a sincere Christian: For*

Sic oculos, sic ille manus, six ora ferebat.

So the people of God do speak, so they pray, and even so they open their conditions: these look like Saints, but are none. The (3.) *is to see so many real Saints in whom the Spirit of truth is, who get through the impetuous workings of their corruption, and neglecting of the watch over their hearts, do often fall into such scandalous practices, that they look like Hypocrites, though they are not so.*

These are three sad sights indeed, and Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep abundantly over them all!

For the first I would mourn heartily, considering that they (so continuing) must be damned eternally, 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. 1 Cor. 6. 9.

For the second, I would both weep and tremble, considering that they (so abiding) must

must be Damned doubly, Matth. 24. 51.

And for the third, no less than any of the rest, because though they themselve may and shall be saved, yet their examples make fast the bonds of Death upon both the former; Matth. 18. 7. 2 Sam, 12. 13, 14.

Alas! that ever they should shed the blood of other Souls, for whom Christ shed his own blood! That ever they should be cruel to others who have found Christ so kind to them! I know they dare not do it directly and intentionally. Suffer me here to digress a little and expostulate with these prejudiced and hardened Souls, I will presently return to you again. O why do you mischief your own Souls by other mens example? because they stumble and break their shins, will you fall and break your necks? I desire all such as harden themselves by these things, and take up a good opinion of their own deplorable condition, which soberly consider, and answer these three Queries.

1. Q. *Doth Religion any way countenance or patronize the sinful practices of its Professors, or doth it not rather impartially and severely condemn them? It is the Glory of the Christian Religion that it is pure and undefiled*, James 1. 27. *no Doctrine so holy*, Psal, 19. 8. *nor doth any make more provi-*

sion for an holy Life, Titus 2. 11, 12. *Indeed there is a cause wherein we may charge the evil practices of men upon their Principles, but that is when their practices naturally flow from, and necessarily follows their Principles: as for Example; If I see a Papist sin boldly, I may charge it upon his Principles, for they set Pardons to sale, and so make way for loseness. If I see an* Armenian *slight the Grace of God, and proudly advance himself, I may cry shame upon his Principles, which directly lead to it; but can I do so, where such practices are condemned and provided against by their own avowed Principles which commit them?*

2. Q. *Is it not an irrational thing to let fly at Religion, because of the scandalous ways of some, whilst in the mean time you wholly slight and overlook the Holy and heavenly conversations of many others? Are all that profess Godliness lose and careless in their lives? No, some are an ornament to their profession, and the Glory of Christ: and why must the innocent be condemned with the guilty? why the eleven for one* Judas?

3. Q. *If you condemn Religion because of the scandalous lives of some that profess it: must you not then cast off all Religion in the World, and turn downright Atheists? surely this is the consequent of it: for what*

Religion

Religion is there, but some that profess it walk contrary to that their profession: and then as Constantine *told the* Novatian, *you must set up your Ladder and go to Heaven by your self.*

But alas! it is not our printed Apologies for Religion, but the visible reformations of its professors that must both salve its honour and remove those fatal stumbling blocks at which the blind World strikes and falls into eternal perdition.

Now there are two ways by which this may be effected. First by convincing the conscience of professors of their miscarriages, and the evil and aggravations of them. Secondly, by medicating the heart, and cleansing the fountain whence they proceed: in the first of these, a worthy and eminent servant of Christ hath lately laboured holding a clear Gospel-glass before the faces of Professors, which truly represents their spots and blemishes. If he See Gospel-Glass.

that reads it, will consider aptly, and practise, it shall doubtless turn to his Salvation, but if it turn to no good account to him that reads it, I know it shall turn to a Testimony for him that wrote it. The second is a principal design of this small Treatise, the subject whereof is exceeding weighty, and of daily use to the people of God, though the manner of hand-

ling it be attended with many defects and weaknesses; every one cannot be excellent who yet may be useful.

I will exercise your patience no longer than whilst I tell you;

1. *Why I published it to the view of all the World.*

2. *Why I direct it particularly to you.*

First, for the publication of it, take this sincere and brief account, that as I was led to that subject by a special providence, so to the publication of it by a kind of necessity: the providence at first leading me to it was this; A dear and choice Friend of my intimate acquaintance, being under much inward trouble upon the account of some special Heart disorder opened the case to me, and earnestly requested some rules and helps on that particular; whilst I was bending my thoughts to that special case, divers other cases of like importance, (some of which were dependent upon that Consideration) occurred to my thoughts, and this Scripture which I have insisted upon presented it self, as a fit foundation for the whole discourse, which being lengthned out to what you see, divers Friends requested me to transcribe for their use, divers of the cases here handled: and some others begg'd me to publish the whole, to which I was in a manner necessitated, to save the

pains

pains of transcribing, which to me is very tedious and tiresome work: and just as I had almost finished the Copy, an opportunity presented (and that somewhat strangely) to make it publick. So that from first to last I have been carried from my first intentions in this thing.

Obj. *If any say, the World is even cloyed with Books, and therefore though the discourse be necessary, yet the publication is needless.*

Sol. 1. *I answer there are multitudes of Books indeed, and of them many concern not themselves about root-truths, and practical Godliness but spend their strength upon impracticable notions, and frivolous controversies: many also strike at root-truths, and endeavour to undermine the power of Godliness: and some there are that nourish the Root, and tend to clear and confirm, to prepare and apply the great truths of the Gospel that they may be Bread for souls to live and feed on: now, though I could wish that those that have handled the Pen of the Scribe, had better employed their time and pains than to obtrude such useless discourses upon the World, yet for the Books of the latter rank, I say that when Husbandmen complain of two much corn, let Christians complain of too many such Books.*

2. *And if you be so highly conceited of*

your own furniture and ability, that such Books are needless to you; if you let them alone they will do you no hurt, and other poor hungry souls will be glad of them, and bless God for what you despise and leave.

Obj. *If it be said that several of the cases here handled touch not your condition: I answer,*

Sol. 1. *That which is not your condition may be anothers condition. If you be placed in an easie, full and prosperous state; and so have no need of the helps here offered to support your heart under pinching wants, others are forced to live by faith for every days provision: If you be dandled upon the knee of Providence, some of your Brethren are under its feet. If you have inward peace, and tranquility of Spirit, and so need not the Counsels here given to ward off those desperate conclusions that poor afflicted souls are ready to draw upon themselves at such a time; yet it may be a word in season to them, and they say as* David *to* Abigail, *blessed be thou of the Lord, and blessed be thy advice.*

2. *That may be your condition shortly, which is not your condition for the present: say not, thy Mountain stands strong, thou shalt never be moved: There are changes in the Right Hand of the most High, and then those truths which are little more esteemed than*

Hedge-

Hedge-fruits will be as Apples of Gold in Pittures of Silver. In Jer. 10. 11. *The Prophet there teaches the Jews (who then dwelt in their own Houses) how to defend their Religion in* Babylon, *and what they should say to the* Caldeans *there, and therefore that verse is written in* Caldee. *So much for the reasons of its publication: Next for the Dedication of it to you, I was induced thereto by the consideration, (1.) Of the relation I have to you above all the People in the World: I look upon my gift as yours; my time as yours, and all the Talents I am entrusted with as yours: It is not with you as with a Woman whose Husband is dead, and so is freed from the Law of her Husband, the relation still continues, and so do all the mutual duties of it. (2.) By the consideration of my necessitated absence from you, I would not that personal absence should by insensible degrees, untwist (as usually it doth) the cord of friendship, and therefore have endeavoured (as absent friends use to do) to preserve and strengthen it by this small remembrance. It was* Vespatians *answer to* Apollonius *when he desired access for two Philosophers: My Doors (said* Vespasian) *are always open to Philosophers, but my very Breast is open to thee: I cannot say with him, my doors are open for the free access of friends, being by a*

sad

sad providence shut against my self; But this I can say, my very Breast is still open to you; you are as dear to me as ever. (3.) *Another inducement (and indeed the main) was the perpetual usefulness and necessity of these truths for you which you will have continual need of: And I know few of you have such happy Memories to retain, and I cannot be always with you to inculcate these things, but* litera scripta manet; *I was willing to leave this with you for a Legacy, as a Testimony of sincere love for, and care over you: This may counsel and direct you when I cannot, I may be rendred useless to you by a civil or natural Death; but this will out-live me, and O that it may serve your souls when I am silent in the Dust!*

To hasten now to a Conclusion, I have only these three Requests to you, which I earnestly beseech you not to deny me; Yea, I charge you, as ever you hope to appear with comfort before the great Shepherd, do not dare to slight these Requests. (1.) *Above all other studies in the World, study your own Hearts: Waste not a minute more of your precious time about frivolous and sapless Controversies. It is reported even of* Bellermine (*how truly I examine not*) quod a studiis Scholasticæ Theologiæ averteretur fere nauseabundus

Fuligattus in vita Bellar.

dus, quoniam succo carebant liquidæ pietatis, (*i.e.*) *He turned with loathing from the study of School-Divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of Piety:*

I had rather it should be said of you, as one said of Swinkfeldius; (He wanted a regular head, but not an honest heart;) *then that you should have regular Heads, and irregular Hearts: My dear Flock, I have according to the Grace given me, laboured in the course of my Ministry among you, to feed you with the Heart-strengthening bread of Practical Doctrine, and I assure you, it is far better you should have the sweet and saving impressions of Gospel-Truths, feelingly, and powerfully conveyed to your Hearts; than only to understand them by a bare ratiocination, or a dry syllogistical inference: Leave trifling studies to such as have time lying on their hands, and know not how to employ it: Remember you are at the door of Eternity, and have other work to do; those hours you spend upon heart-work in your Closets, are the golden spots of all your time, and will have the sweetest influence into your last hour: Never forget those* Sermons *I Preached to you, upon that subject, from* 2 Kings 22. 2, 3. *Heart-work is weighty and difficult work, an error there may cost you your souls: I may say of it,*

Caput regulatum illi defuit, cor bonum non defuit.

as

as Augustine *speaks of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Nihilo facilius aut periculosius erratur; *a man can err in nothing more easily or more dangerously: O then, study your hearts.* (2.) *My next Request is, That you will carefully look to your Conversations, and be accurate in all your ways, hold forth the word of Life: be sure by the strictness and holiness of your selves, to settle your selves in the very consciences of your Enemies. Remember that your lives must be produced in the great day, to judg the World,* 1 Cor. 6. 2. *Oh then what manner of persons ought you to be! You have many Eyes over you, the Omniscient Eye of God, that searcheth the Heart and Reins,* Rev. 2, 23. *The vigilant eye of Satan,* Job 1. 7, 8. *The envious eyes of Enemies, that curiously observe you,* Psal. 5. 8. *The quick and observant eye of Conscience, which none of your actions escape,* Rom. 9. 1.

Oh then be precise and accurate in all manner of Coversation: keep up the power of Godliness in your Closets *and* Families, *and then you will not let it fall in your more publick Employments, and Converse in the World: I have often told you, that it is the Honour of the Gospel, that it makes the best Parents and Children; The best Masters and Servants; the best Husband and Wives in the World.*

My

My third and last request, is, that you pray for me: I hope I can say, and am sure some of you have acknowledged, that I came at first among you, as the return and answer of your Prayers: And indeed so it should be, see Luke 10. 2. *I am perswaded also, I have been carried on in my work by your Prayers: 'Tis sweet when it is so, see* Ephes. 6. 18, 19. *And I hope by your Prayers to receive yet a further benefit, even that which is mentioned,* Heb. 13. 18, 19. Philem. *v.* 22. *And truly it is but equal that you should pray for me, I have often prayed for you: Let the Pulpit, Family and Closet witness for me: And God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.*

Yea, Friends, your own interest may perswade to it: What mercies you obtain for me, redound to your own advantage, if God preserve me, it is for your use and service: The more gifts and graces a Minister hath, the better for them that shall wait upon his Ministry: The more God gives in to me, the more I shall be able to give out to you. I will detain you no longer, but to entreat you to accept this small testification of my great love, and have recourse to it, according as the exigencies of your condition shall require: Read it considering, and obediently; Judge it not by the dress and stile, but by the weight

and

savour of what you read. 'Tis a good Rule of Bernard, In ligendis libris, non quæramus scientiam sed saporem, (i.e.) *In reading Books, regard not so much the Science, as the Savour: That it may prove the savour of Life unto Life to you, and all those into whose hands it shall come, is the hearty desire of*

Your loving and

faithful Pastor,

John Flavel.

From my Study
at Ley *in* Slapton
Octob. 7. 1667.

Prov. 4 23.

Keep thy Heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues if Life.

THe *Heart* of Man is his worst part before it be Regenerate; and the best afterwards: It is the seat of Principles, and fountain of Actions. The eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to principally fixed upon it.

The greatest difficulty in conversion is to win the heart to God, and the greatest difficulty after Conversion is to keep the heart with God, here lies the very pinch and stress of Religion; here's that that makes the way to life a narrow way, and the Gate of Heaven a strait Gate. Direction and help in this great work, is the scope and sum of the Text, wherein we have,

1. An Exhortation, *Keep thy heart with all diligence.*

2. The Reason or Motive enforcing it, *For out of it are the issues of Life.*

In the Exhortation I shall consider,

I. The matter of the Duty.

II. The means of performing it.

1. The matter of the Duty; *Keep thy heart.*

heart. Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which Philosophers call the *Primum vivens & ultimum moriens*, the first that lives, and the last that dies; but by Heart in a Metaphor, the Scripture sometimes understands some particular noble faculty of the Soul, in *Rom.* 1. 21. it is pure for the understanding part, their foolish Heart, (*i.e.*) *their foolish understanding was darkned.* And *Psal.* 119. 11. It is put for the memory, *Thy Word have I hid in my heart.* And 1 *John* 3. 20. It is put for the Conscience, which hath in it both the light of the Understanding, and the recognitions of the Memory: If our heart condemn us; (*i.e.*) if our Conscience, whose proper office is to condemn. But here we are to take it more generally for the whole soul, or inner-man; for look what the heart is to the body, that the soul is to the Man, and what health is to the Heart, that holiness is to the Soul: *Quod sanetas in corpore, est sanctitas in corde.* The state of the whole Body depends upon the soundness and vigour of the Heart, and the everlasting state of the whole man upon the good or ill condition of the Soul.

And by keeping the Heart, understand the diligent and constant use and improvement of all holy Means and Duties, to preserve the Soul from sin, and maintain its sweet and free communion with God.

* *Lavater*

* *Lavater in loc.* will have the ward taken from a beſieged Garriſon begirt by many Enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by the treacherous Citizens within, in which danger the Soldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch; and whereas the expreſſion, (*Keep thy Heart*) ſeems to put it upon us as our work, yet it doth not imply a ſufficiency or ability in us to do it; we are as able to ſtop the Sun in its courſe, or make the Rivers run backwards, as by our own skill and power to rule and order our hearts: We may as well be our own *Saviours*, as our own *Keepers*, and yet *Soloman* ſpeaks properly enough when he ſaith, *Keep thy heart*, becauſe the Duty is ours, though the power be Gods. A natural Man hath no power, a gracions man hath ſome, though not ſufficient, and that power he hath, depends upon the exciting and aſſiſting ſtrength of Chriſt; *Gratia gratiam poſtulat*, Grace within us is beholding to Grace without us. *John* 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* So much of the matter of the Duty.

* I ſay conſtant, for the reaſon added in the Text, extends the duty to all the ſtates and conditions of a Chriſtians life and makes it blind *ad ſemper*: if the heart muſt be kept, becauſe out of it were the iſſues of life; then as long as theſe iſſues of life do flow out of it, we are obliged to keep it.

2. The manner of performing it, is *with all*

all diligence, the Hebrew is very Emphatical בכל־משמר *cum omni custodia*, keep with all keeping, *q. d.* keep; set double guards, your hearts will be gone else: And this vehemency of expression with which the Duty is urged, plainly implies how difficult it is to keep our hearts, and how dangerous to let them go.

3. The Reason or motive quickning to this duty is very forcible and weighty. *For out of it are the issues of life.* That is, it is the Source and Fountain of all vital actions and operations; *Hinc fons boni & peccandi origo*, saith *Ferom*; it is the Spring and original both of good and evil, as the Spring in a Watch that sets all the wheels in motion. The heart is the Treasure, the Hand and Tongue but the shops, what is in these came from thence; the hand and Tongue always begin where the heart ends. The heart contrives and the members execute, *Luke* 6. 46. *A good man out of the good treasury of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasury of his heart bringeth forth evil things; for out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh.* So then if the heart err in its work, these must needs miscarry in theirs; for Heart-errours are like the errours of the first concoction, which cannot be rectified afterwards: Or like the misplacing and inverting of the stamps and letters

ters in the Press, which must needs cause so many Errata's in all the Copies that are Printed off. O then! How important a duty is that which is contained in the following Proposition?

Doct. *That the keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition, is the great business of a Christians life.*

What the *Philosopher* saith of Waters, is as properly applicable to Hearts, *suis terminis difficile continetur*; 'tis hard to keep them within any bounds: God hath set bounds and limits to them, yet how frequently do they transgress not only the bounds of Grace and Religion, but even of Reason and common Honesty; *Hic labor, hoc opus est*, this is that which affords the Christian matter of labour, fear and trembling to his dying-day. 'Tis not the cleansing of the hand that makes a Christian, for many an Hypocrite can shew as fair a hand as he, but the purifying, watching, and right ordering of the heart; this is the thing that provokes so many sad complaints, and costs so many deep groans and brinish tears. 'Twas the pride of *Hezekiah*'s heart that made him lye in the dust mourning before the Lord, 2*Chron.* 32.26. 'Twas the fear of Hypocrisie invading the heart, that made *David* cry, *Let my heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be not ashamed, Psal.* 119. 80. 'Twas the sad experience he had of the

Divisions

Diviſions and Diſtractions of his own heart in the ſervice of God, that made him pour out that prayer, *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy name.*

The method in which I ſhall improve the point, ſhall be this:

1. Firſt, I ſhall enquire what the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

2. Secondly, Aſſign divers Reaſons, why Chriſtians muſt make this the great work and buſineſs of their lives.

3. Thirdly, Point at thoſe ſpecial ſeaſons which eſpecially call for this diligence in keeping the heart.

4. Fourthly and laſtly, apply the whole in ſeveral uſes.

1. What the keeping of the heart ſuppoſes and imports.

To keep the heart, neceſſarily ſuppoſes a previous work of Sanctification; which hath ſet the hart right by giving it a new ſpiritul bent and inclination; for as long as the heart is *not ſet right* by Grace, as to its habitual frame, no duties or means can *keep it right* with God. Self is the poiſe of the unſanctified heart, which byaſſes and moves it in all its deſigns and actions; and as long as it is ſo, it is impoſſible that any external means ſhould keep it with God.

Man by Creation was of one conſtant uniform frame and tenor of Spirit, held one ſtraight

ſtraight and even courſe; not one thought or faculty revell'd or diſorder'd, his mind had a perfect illumination to underſtand & know the will of God, his will a perfect compliance therewith; his ſenſitive appetite and other inferiour powers, ſtood in a moſt obedient ſubordination.

Man by degeneration is become a moſt diſordered and rebellious Creature, conteſting with, and oppoſing his Maker at the *firſt cauſe*, by ſelf-dependance; as the *chiefeſt good*, by ſelf-love; as the *higheſt Lord*, by ſelf-will; and as the *laſt end*, by ſelf-ſeeking: and ſo it is quite diſordered, and all his acts irregular: His illuminated underſtanding is clouded with ignorance, his complying will full of rebellion and ſtubbornneſs; his ſubordinate Powers, caſting off the dominion and government of the ſuperior faculties.

But by Regeneration, this diſorder'd Soul is ſet right again; Sanctification being the rectifying, and due framing, or as the Scripture phraſes it, the renovation of the Soul after the image of God, *Eph.* 4. 24. in which, *ſelf-dependance* is removed by Faith; *ſelf-love*, by love of God; *ſelf-will*, by ſubjection and obedience to the will of God; and *ſelf-ſeeking* by ſelf-denial. The darkned underſtanding is again illuminated, *Eph.* 1. 18. the refractory will ſweetly ſubdu'd, *Pſal.* 110. 3. the rebellious appetite, or concupiſcence,

cence, gradually conquered, *Rom.*6.7. *per tot.* And thus the Soul which ſin had univerſally depraved, is again by Grace reſtored and rectified.

This being preſuppoſed, it will not be difficult to apprehend, what it is to keep the Heart, which is nothing elſe but the *conſtant care and diligence of ſuch a renewed man, to preſerve his Soul in that holy frame to which grace hath reduced it, & daily ſtrives to hold it.*

For though grace hath in great meaſure rectified the Soul, and given it an habitual and heavenly temper; yet ſin often actually diſcompoſes it again, ſo that even a gracious heart is like a Muſical Inſtrument, which though it be never ſo exactly tuned, a ſmall matter brings it out of tune again; yea, hang it aſide but a little, & it will need ſetting again, before you can play another Leſſon on it; even ſo ſtands the caſe with gracious hearts; if they are in frame in one duty, yet how dull, dead and diſordered, when they come to another: and therefore every duty needs a particular preparation of the heart, *Job.* 11.13. *If thou prepare thine heart, & ſtretch thy hands towards him*: Well then, to keep the heart, is carefully to preſerve it from ſin which diſorders it; and maintain that ſpiritual and gracious frame which fits it for a life of communion with God: and this includes theſe ſix acts in it.

1. Firſt,

1. First, frequent observation of the frame of the Heart, turning in and examining how the case stands with it, this is one part of the work. Carnal and formal persons take no head to this, they cannot be brought to confer with their own hearts, there are some men and women that have lived forty or fifty years in the world, and have scarce had one hours discourse with their own hearts all that while; 'tis an hard thing to bring a man and himself together upon such an account; but Saints know those Soliquies and self-conferences to be of excellent use and advantage. The Heathen could say, *anima sedendo & quiescendo fit sapience*, the Soul is made wise in sitting still in quietness, though Bankrupts care not to look into their Books of account; yet upright hearts will know whether they go backward or forward, *Psal.* 77. 6. *I commune with my own heart*. The heart can never be kept until its case be examined and understood.

2. It includes deep humiliations for heart-evils and discords, thus *Hezekiah* humbled himself for the Pride of his heart, 2. *Chron.* 32. 26. Thus the People were ordered to spread forth their hands to God in Prayer, in a sense of the plague of their own hearts, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. upon this account many an upright heart hath been laid low before God. Oh what an heart have I? they have in

the confessions pointed at the heart, their painted place; Lord here is the wound here is the Plague-sore: it is with the heart well kept, as it is with the eye, which is a fit emblem of it; if a small dust get into the eye, it will never leave twinkling and watring till it have wept it out: So the upright heart cannot be at rest till it have wept out its troubles, and poured out its complaints before the Lord.

3. It includes earnest Supplications, and instant Prayer for heart-purifying and rectifying Grace, whensin, hath defiled and disordered it, so *Psal.* 19. 12. *Cleanse thou me from secret faults*, and *Psal.* 16. 11, *Unite my heart to fear thy Name*. Saints have always many such Petitions depending before the Throne of Gods Grace: this is the thing which is most pleaded by them with God when they are praying for outward mercies, haply their Spirits may be more remiss, but when it comes to the heart-case, then they intend their Spirits to the utmost, fill their mouths with Arguments, weep and make supplications; Oh, for a better heart! Oh for a heart to love God more! To hate sin more, to walk more evenly with God; Lord deny not to me such a Heart whatever thou deny me; Give me an heart to fear thee, love, and delight in thee, if I beg my bread in desolate places. 'Tis observed o
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holy Mr. *Bradford*, that when he was confessing sin, he would never give over confessing untill he had felt some brokenness of Heart for that sin, and when praying for any spiritual Mercy would never give over that suit, till he had got some relish of that Mercy; that's the third thing included in keeping the heart.

4. It includes the imposing of strong ingagements and bounds upon our selves to walk more accurately with God, and avoid the occasions whereby the Heart may be induced to sin: Well composed, advised, and deliberate Vows are in some cases of excellent use to guard the Heart against some special sin. So *Job* 31. 1 *I made a Covenant with mine eyes*; by this means holy ones have overawed their souls, and preserved themselves from defilement by some special Heart-corruptions.

5. It includes a constant holy jealousie over our own hearts; quicksighted self-jealousie is an excellent preservative from sin. He that will keep his heart, must have the eyes of his soul awake and open upon all the disorderly and tumultuous stirrings of his affections: if the affections break loose, and the passions be stirred, the Soul must discover and suppress them before they get to an height: O my soul dost thou well in this? my tumultuous thoughts and Passions, where

is your Commission? *State viri, quæ cauſ via? quive eſtis in armis?* Virg.

Happy is the man that thus feareth always. *Prov.* 28. 14. by this fear of the Lord it is that men depart from evil, ſhake off ſecurity, and preſerve themſelves from iniquity, he that will keep his heart, muſt feed with fear, rejoice with fear, and paſs the whole time of his ſojorning here in fear, and all little enough to keep the heart from ſin.

6. And laſtly; to add no more, it includes the reallizing of Gods preſence with us, and getting the Lord always before us: this the people of God have found a ſingular means to keep their heart upright, and awe them from ſin: when the eye of our Faith is fixed upon the eye of Gods Omniſcience, we dare not let out our thoughts and affections to vanity: Holy *Job* durſt not ſuffer his heart to yield to an impure, vain thought, and what was it that moved him to ſo great a circumſpection? Why he tells you, *Job.* 31. 1. *Doth he not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps*; *Walk before me* (ſaith God to *Abraham*) *and be thou perfect*, *Gen.* 17. 1. Even as Parents uſe to ſet their Children in the Congregation before them, knowing that elſe they will be toying and playing; ſo would the heart of the man too, were it not for the eye of God.

In theſe and ſuch like particulars, do gracious

cious souls express the care they have of their hearts; they are as careful to prevent the breaking loose of their corruptions in times of temptation, as Seamen are to bind fast their Guns that they break not in a storm; as careful to preserve the sweetness and comfort they have got from God in any duty, as one that comes out of an hot bath, or great sweat, is of taking cold, by going forth into the Chill air: this is the work, and of all works in Religon is the most difficult, constant and important work.

1. 'Tis the hardest work; heart-work is hard work indeed: to shuffle over Religious duties with a loose and heedless Spirit, will cost no great pains, but to set thy self before the Lord, and tye up thy loose and vain thoughts to a constant and serious attendance upon him, this will cost thee something; to attain a facility and dexterity of language in Prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expressions is easie, but to get thy heart broken for sin while thou art confessing it; melted with free grace whilst thou art blessing God for it, to be really ashamed and humbled through the apprehensions of Gods infinite Holiness, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not only in, but after Duty; will surely cost thee some groans, and travelling pains of soul: to repress the outward acts of sin, and

compose the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner is no great matter, even carnal persons by the force of common Principles can do this, but to kill the root of corruption within, to set and keep up a holy Government over thy thoughts, to have all things lye straight and orderly in the heart, this is not easie.

2. 'Tis a constant work; the keeping of the Heart is such a work, as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life end together: It is with a Christian in this business as it is with Seamen, that have sprung a Leak at Sea, if they tug not constantly at the pump, the water encreases upon them, and will quickly sink them: 'tis in vain for them to say the work is hard and we are weary: There is no time or condition in the life of a Christian, which will suffer an intermission of this work: It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up *of Moses* his hands whilst *Israel* and *Amalek* were fighting below, *Exod.* 17. 12. No sooner do *Moses* his hands grow weary and sink down, but *Amalek* prevails: You know it cost *David* and *Peter* many a sad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

3. 'Tis the most important business of Christians Life; without this we are but

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Formaliſts in Religion: All our profeſſions, gifts and duties ſignifie nothing: *My Son give me thine heart*, *Prov.*23. 26. God is pleaſed to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt: he will put this honour upon the creature to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not what ever elſe you bring to it, there is not ſo much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in him: Concerning the heart, God ſeems to ſay as *Joſeph* of *Benjamin*, *if you bring not* Benjamin *with you, you ſhall not ſee my face.* Amongſt the Heathens when the Beaſt was cut up for Sacrifice, the firſt thing the Prieſt lookt upon was the heart, and if that were unſound and naught, The Sacrifice was rejected. God rejects all duties (how glorious ſo ever in other reſpects) offered him without a heart: he that performs duty without a heart, *viz.* needleſly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with a double heart, *viz.* needleſly, is no more accepted with God, than he that performs it with a double heart, *viz.* Hypocritically. *Iſa.*66.3. And thus I have briefly opened the nature of the Duty, what is imported in this phraſe, *Keep thy heart.*

2. Next, I ſhall give you ſome rational accouut why Chriſtians ſhould make this the great buſineſs of their lives, to keep their hearts?

The importance and necessity of making this our great and main business, will manifestly appear in that, 1. The honour of God 2. The sincerity of our profession. 3. The beuty of our conversation. 4. The comfort of our Souls. 5. The improvement of our Graces: And 6. Our stability in the hour of temptation, are all wrapt up in, & dependant on our sincerity and care in managing of this work.

1. The Glory of God is much concerned therein; heart-evils are very provoking evils to the Lord. The Schools do well observe, that outward sins are *majoris infamiæ*, sins of greater infamy; but heart-sins are *majoris reatus*, of deeper guilt. How severely hath the Great God declared his wrath from Heaven against Heart-wickedness? The great Crime for which the old World stands indicted, *Gen.* 6. 5, 6, 7. is heart-wickedness; *God saw that every imagination* (or fiction) *of their heart was only evil, and that continually*: for which he sent the dreadfullest Judgment that was ever executed since the World began: *And the Lord said, I will destroy Man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both Man and Beast, and the creeping things, and the Fowls of Heaven, for it repenteth me that I made Man*, v. 7. We find not their Murders, Adulteries, Blasphemies, (though they were defiled with these) particularly alledged against them;

them; but the evils of their hearts: yea, that which God was provoked by, as to give up his peculiar inheritance into the enemies hand, was the evil of their hearts, *Jer.* 4. 14. *O Jerusalem wash thine heart from wickedness that thou mayst be saved, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* The wickedness and vanity of their thoughts God took special notice of; and because of this the *Chaldean* must come upon them as a *Lion from his thickets*, v. 7. *and tear them to pieces.* For the very sin of thoughts it was that God threw down the faln Angels from Heaven, and keeps them still in everlasting chains to the Judgment of the great day; by which expression is not obscurely intimated some extraordinary Judgment to which they are reserved, as Prisoners that have most irons laid upon them, may be supposed to be the greatest Malefactors: and what was their sin? Why, only spiritual wickedness, for they having no bodily Organs, could act nothing externally against God. Yea, meer heart-evils are so provoking, that for them he rejects with indignation all the duties that some perform unto him, *Isa.* 66. 3. *He that killeth an Ox, is as if he slew a Man, he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut of a Dogs neck, he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood, he that burneth Incence, as if he blessed an Idol.* In

what words could the abhorrence of a Creatures action be more fully expressed by the Holy God; Murther and Idolatry are not more vile in his account than their Sacrifices, though materially such as himself appointed; and what made him so? the following words inform us, *Their Soul delighteth in their Abominations.*

To conclude; such is the vileness of meer heart-sins that the Scriptures somtimes intimate the difficulty of pardon for them. So in the case of *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 21. his heart was not right, he had vile thoughts of God, and the things of God, the Apostle bids him *repent and pray, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him.* Oh then never slight heart-evils, for by these God is highly wronged and provoked, and for this reason let every Christian make it his work to keep his heart with all diligence.

2. The sincerity of our profession depends much upon the care and conscience we have in keeping our hearts; for it's most certain that a man is but an hipocrite in his profession, how curious soever he be in the externals of Religion, that is heedless and careless of the frame of his heart, you have a pregnant instance of this in the case of *Jehu*, 2 *Kings* 10 31. *But* Jehu *took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord God of Israel with his heart.* That Context gives

gives us an account of the great ſervice perform'd by *Jehu* againſt the houſe of *Ahab* and *Baal*, as alſo of a great temporal reward given him by God for that ſervice, even that his Children to the fourth Generation ſhould ſit upon the throne of *Iſrael*. And yet in theſe words *Jehu* is cenſured for an hypocrite; though God approved and rewarded the work, yet he abhorred and rejected the Perſon that did it as hypocritical: and wherein lay his hypocriſie, but in this, that he took no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord with his heart? (*i. e.*) he did all inſincerely and for ſelf-ends, and though the work he did were materially good; yet he not purging his heart from thoſe unworthy ſelf deſigns in doing it, was an hypocrite: And *Simon*, of whom we ſpake before: though he appeared ſuch a perſon that the Apoſtle could not regularly refuſe him, yet his hypocriſie was quickly diſcovered: and what diſcovered it? but this, that though he profeſſed and aſſociated himſelf with the Saints, yet he was a ſtranger to the mortification of heart-ſins: *Thy heart is not right with God*, *Acts* 8. 21. 'Tis true, there is a great difference among Chriſtians themſelves in their diligence and dexterity about heart-work; ſome are more converſant and ſucceſsful in it than others are, but he that takes no heed to his heart, he that is not careful

ful to order it aright before God, is but an hypocrite, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and sit before thee* [*as my people*] *and they hear thy words, but they will not do them, for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness.* Here were a company of formal Hypocrites, as is evident by that expression [*As my people*] like them, but not of them: and what made them so? their out-side was fair, here were reverent postures, high professions, much seeming joy and delight in Ordinances, *Thou art to them as a lovely Song*; yea, but for all this they kept not their hearts with God in those Duties, their hearts were commanded by their lusts, they went after their covetousness; had they kept their hearts with God, all had been well, but not regarding which way their heart went in duty; there lay the coar of their Hypocresie.

Obj. If any upright Soul should hence infer, then I am an hypocrite too, for many times my heart departs from God in duty, do what I can, yet I cannot hold it close with God.

Sol. To this I answer, the very Objection carries in it its own Solution: Thou sayest, Do what I can, yet I cannot keep my heart with God. Soul, if thou dost what thou canst thou hast the blessing of an upright, though God sees good to exercise

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thee under the affliction of a discomposed heart. There remains still some wildness in the thoughts and fancies of the best to humble them, but if you find a care before to prevent them, and opposition against them when they come, grief and sorrow afterwards; you will find enough to clear you from reigning Hypocrisie. (1.) This forecare is seen partly in laying up the word in thine heart to prevent them, *Psal.* 119. 11. *Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee*: partly in our endeavors to engage our heart to God, *Jer.* 30. 21. and partly in begging preventing grace from God in our on-sets upon duty, *Psal.* 119. 36,37. 'tis a good sign where this care goes before a duty. And (2.) 'tis a sweet sign of uprightness to oppose them in their first rise, *Psal.* 119. 113. *I hate vain thoughts.* Gal. 5. 17. *The Spirit lusteth after the flesh.* And (3.) Thy after-grief discovers thy upright heart; if with *Hezekiah* thou art humbled for the evils of thy heart, thou hast no reason from these disorders to question the integrity of it; but to suffer sin to lodge quietly in the heart, to let the heart habitually and uncontrolledly wander from God, is a sad and dangerous symptom indeed.

3. The beauty of our Conversation arises from the heavenly frame, and holy order

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of our ſpirits; there is a ſpiritual luſtre and beauty in the converſation of Saints, *The Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour*, they ſhine as the lights of the World; but whatever luſtre and beauty is in their lives, comes from the excellency of their Spirits, as a Candle within puts a luſtre upon the Lanthorn in which it ſhines. It is impoſſible that a diſordered and neglected heart ſhould ever produce a well ordered converſation; and ſince (as the Text obſerves) the iſſues or ſtreams of life flow out of the heart as their Fountain, it muſt needs follow, that ſuch as the heart is, the life will be: hence, 1 *Pet.* 11. 12. *Abſtain from fleſhly luſts---having your converſation honeſt* * or beautiful, as the Greek word imports, *Iſa* 55 7 *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* His way notes the courſe of his life, his thoughts the frame of his heart; and therefore ſince the way and courſe of his life flows from his thoughts, or the frame of his heart, both or neither will be forſaken: the heart is the womb of all actions, theſe actions are vernally and ſeminally contained in our thoughts, theſe thoughts being once made up into affections, are quickly made out into ſuitble actions and practices. If the heart be wicked, then, as Chriſt ſaith,

* Καλην.

Matth.

Matth. 15. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries,* &c. Mark the Order, first, wanton or revengeful thoughts, then unclean or Murderous practices.

And if the heart be holy and spiritual, then as *David* speaks from sweet experience, in *Psal.* 45. 1. *My heart is* [*inditing*] *a good matter, I speak of the thing which* [*I have made*] *my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer.* Here's life richly beautified with good works; some ready made; *I will speak of the things which I have made:* others, upon the wheel making, *My heart is Inditing,* but both proceeding from the heavenly frame of his heart.

Put but the heart in frame, and the life will quickly discover that it is so. I think it is not very difficult to descrn by the Duties and Converses of Christians, what frames their spirits are under; take a Christian in a good frame, and how serious heavenly, and profitable will his Converses and duties be! what a lovely companion is he, during the continuance of it! 'Twould do any ones heart good to be with him at such a time, *Psal.* 37. 30, 31. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, the Law of his God is in his heart.*

When the heart is up with God, and full of God, how dextrously and ingeniously will

will he wind in ſpiritual diſcourſe, improving every occaſion and advantage to ſome heavenly purpoſe, few words run then at the waſte ſpout.

And what elſe can be the reaſon, why the diſcourſes & duties of many Chriſtians are become ſo frothy and unprofitable; their communication both with God, & one another becomes as a dry ſtake, but becauſe their hearts are neglected. Surely this muſt be the reaſon of it, and verily it is an evil greatly to be bewailed, for as by this, Chriſtian fellowſhip is become a ſapleſs thing, ſo the attracting beauty that was wont to ſhine from the converſations of the Saints upon the Faces and Conſciences of the World (which if it did not allure and bring them in love with the ways of God, yet at leaſt left a Teſtimony in their conſciences of the excellency of thoſe men and their way) this is in a great meaſure loſt, to the unſpeakable detriment of Religion.

Time was, when Chriſtians did carry it at ſuch a rate, that the World ſtood at a gaze at them, as that word ξενίζονται. 1 *Pet.* 4. 4. imports, their life and language were of a different ſtrain from others, their tongues diſcovered them to be *Galileans* where-ever they came; but now ſince vain ſpeculations, and fruitleſs controverſies have ſo obtained, and heart-work, practical

practical godlines, so much neglected amo[ng] Professors, the case is sadly altered, their di[s]course is become like other Mens: if they come among you now, they may (to allude to that, *Act.* 2.6.) *Hear every man speak in his own language*. And truly I have little hope to see this evil redressed, and the credit of Religion again repaired, till Christians fall again to their old work, till they ply heart-work closer: when the salt of heavenly-mindedness again cast into the Spirit, the *streams* will be clearer and sweeter.

4. The comforts of souls doth much depend upon the keeping of our hearts, for he that is negligent in attending his own heart, is (ordinarily) a great stranger to assurance, & the sweet comforts flowing from it.

Indeed, If the *Antimonian* Doctrin were true, which teaches you to reject all marks and signs for the trial of your condition, telling you it is only the Spirit that immediately assures you by witnessing your adoption directly without them, then you might be careless of your hearts, yea, strangers to them, and yet no strangers to comfort: but since both Scripture and experience do confute this dotage, I hope you will never look for comfort in that unscriptural way. I deny not but it is the work & office of the Spirit to assure you, and yet do confidently affirm, that if ever you attain assurance in the ordinary

dinary way wherein God dispenses it, you must take pains with your own hearts, you may expect your comforts upon easier terms; but I am mistaken if ever you enjoy them upon any other: *Give all diligence; prove your selves:* this is the Scripture way. I remember Mr. *Roberts* in his Treatise of the Covenant, tells us, that he knew a Christian who in the infancy of his Christianity, so vehemently panted after the infallible assurance of God's love, that for a long time together he earnestly desired some voice from Heaven, yea, sometimes walking in the solitary fields; earnestly desired some Miraculous Voice from the Trees and Stones there; this, after many desires and longings was denied him: but in time a better was offorded in the ordinary way of searching the Word and his own heart. An instance of the like nature the Learned *Gerson* gives us, of one that was driven by temptation upon the very borders of desperation, at last being sweetly setled and assured, one asked him, how he attained it? he answered, *Non ex nova aliqua revelatione*, &c. Not by any extraordinary revelation, but by subjecting his understanding to the Scriptures, and comparing his own heart with them. The Spirit indeed assures by witnessing our adoption, and he witnesseth two ways: (1.) Objectively; (*i.e.*) by working

ing those Graces in our souls which are the conditions of the Promise, and so the Spirit and his Graces in us are all one; the Spirit of God dwelling in us, is a mark of our adoption. Now the Spirit cannot be discerned in his essence, but in his operations; and to discern these is to discern the Spirit, and how these should be discerned without serious searching and diligent watching of the heart, I cannot imagine. (2.) The other way of the spirits witnessing is effectively, (*i.e.*) by irradiating the Soul with a Grace discovering light, shining upon his own work; and this in order of nature follows the former work: he first infuses the Grace, and then opens the eye of the Soul to see it. Now since the heart is the Subject of that infused Grace, even this way of the Spirits witnessing also includes the necessity of keeping carefully our own hearts: for (1.) A neglected heart is so confused and dark that the little grace which is in it is not ordinarily discernable: the most accurate and laborious Christians, that take most pains, and spend most time about their hearts, do yet find it difficult to discover the pure and genuine workings of the Spirit there, how then shall the Christians, which is (comparatively) negligent remiss about heart-work be ever able to discover it? Sincerity which is the *quæsitum*, the thing sought for, lies in the

the heart like a ſmall piece of gold in the bottom of a River, he that will find it, muſt ſtay till the water be clear and ſettled, and then he ſhall ſee it ſparkling at the bottom; and that the heart may be pure and ſettled, how much pains and watching, care and diligence will it coſt?

3. God doth not uſually indulge lazy and negligent Souls with the comforts of Aſſurance, he will not ſo much as ſeem to patronize ſloth and careleſneſs, he will give it, but it ſhall be in his own way: his command hath united our care and comfort together: they are miſtaken that think the beautiful Child of aſſurance may be born without pangs: Ah, how many ſolitary hours have the people of God ſpent in heart examination? How many times have they looked into the World, and then into their hearts? Sometimes they thought they diſcovered ſincerity, and were even ready to draw forth the triumphant concluſion of Aſſurance, then comes a doubt they cannot reſolve, and daſhes all again; many hopes and fears, doubtings and reaſonings they have had in their own breaſts, before they arrived at a comfortable, ſeaſonable ſettlement.

To conclude, ſuppoſe it poſſible for a careleſs Chriſtian to attain Aſſurance, yet 'tis impoſſible he ſhould long retain it; for it is with thoſe whoſe hearts are big with

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the joys of Assurance, As with a pregnant Woman subject to miscarriages; if extraordinary care be not used, it is a thousand to one if ever she embrace a living Child: So 'tis here, a little pride, vanity, carelesness, dashes all that for which thou hast been labouring a long time in many a weary duty. Since then the joy of our life, the comfort of our Souls, rises and falls without diligence in this work; keep your hearts with all diligence.

5. The improvement of our Graces depends on the keeping of our hearts; I never knew Grace thrive in negligent and careless Souls; the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicate there, the more thriving and flourishing Grace is: in *Eph.* 3. 17. we read of being rooted in Grace: Grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, *Psal.* 106. 10. 2 *Cor.* 4. 13. 'tis true, Christ is the root of a Christian; but Christ is *Origo originans*, the originating root: and grace, *Origo originata*, a root originated, planted, and influenced by Christ, according as this thrives under divine influences, so the acts of grace are more or less fruitful and vigorous: Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, these fructifying influences are stopt and cut off, multitudes

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vanities break in upon it, and devour its strengths; the heart is as it were the pasture in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day, *Psal.* 139. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; and when I awake, I am still with thee.* And as the gracious heart feeds and nourishes them, so they refresh and feast the heart, *Psal.* 63. 5, 6. *My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness whilst I think upon thee,* &c. But in the dis-regarded heart, sworms of vain and foolish thoughts are perpetually working, and justle out those spiritual Idea's and thoughts of God, by which the soul should be refreshed.

Besides, the careless heart makes nothing out of any Duty or Ordinance it performs or attends on, and yet these are the Conduits of Heaven from whence Grace is watered and made fruitful; a man may go with an heedless spirit from Ordinance to Ordinance, abide all his days under the choicest teachings, and yet never be improved by them; for heart neglect is a leak in the bottom, no heavenly influences, how rich soever, abide in that Soul, *Matth.* 13. 3, 4. The heart that lies open and common like the High-way, free for all passengers; when

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the seed fell on it, the fowls came and devoured it. Alas! It is not enough to hear, unless we take heed how we hear: a man may pray, and never the better, unless we watch unto Prayer. In a word, all Ordinances, Means and Duties, are blessed unto the improvement of Grace, according to the care and strictness we use in keeping our hearts in them.

6. Lastly, The Stability of our souls in the hour of temptation, will be much according to the care and Conscience we have of keeping our hearts; the careless heart is an easie prey to Satan in the hour of temptation, his main Batteries are raised against that Fort-royal, the Heart; if he win that, he wins all, for it commands the whole Man; and alas, how easie a Conquest is a neglected heart, 'tis no more difficult to surprize it; than for an enemy to enter that City, whose Gates are open and unguarded; 'tis the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it come to its strength. Divines observe this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full strength; there is first the irritation of the *Object*, or that power it hath to work upon and provoke our corrupt nature, which is either done by the real presence of the object, or else by Speculation, when the object

ject (though absent) is held out by the phantasy before the Soul. (2.) Then follows the motion of the sensitive Appetite, which is stirred and provoked by the phantasy, representing it as a sensual good, as having profit or pleasure in it. (3) Then there is consultation in the mind about it, deliberating about the likeliest means of accomplishing it. (4) Next follows the Election or choice of the Will. (5) and lastly, The desire of engagement of the Will to it; all this may be done in a few moments, for the debates of the Soul are quick and soon ended: when it comes thus far, then the heart is won, Satan hath entered victoriously, and displayed his colours upon the Walls of that Royal Fort; But had the heart been well guided at first, it had never come to this height; the temptation had been stopt in the first and second act, and indeed there it's stopt easily, for it is in the motion of a tempted Soul to Sin; as in the motion of a stone falling from the brow of an hill, it is easily stopt at first, but when once it is set a going *Vires acquirit eundo*: and therefore it's the great Wisdome in the World to observe the first motions of the Heart, to check and stop sin there: the motions of sin

Ὄρεξις.

Βούλησις.

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Βούλημα.

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are weakeſt at firſt; a little care and watchfulneſs may prevent much miſchief now, which the careleſs heart not heeding, is brought within the power of temptation; as the *Syrians* were brought blindfold into the midſt of *Samaria*, before they knew where they were.

By this time Reader, I hope thou art fully ſatisfied how conſequential, and neceſſary a work the keeping of the heart is, it being a duty that wraps up ſo many dear intereſts of the Soul in it.

3. Next, According to the method propounded, I proceed to point out thoſe ſpecial Seaſons in the life of a Chriſtian, which require and call for our utmoſt diligence in keeping the heart: for though (as was obſerved before) the Duty bind, *ad ſemper*, and there be no time, or condition of life, in which we may be excuſed from this work; yet there are ſome ſignal ſeaſons, Critical hours, requiring more than a common vigilance over the heart.

And the Firſt,

1. Seaſon. *Is in time of Proſperity, when Providence ſmiles upon us, and dandles us upon her knee. Now Chriſtian, keep thy heart with all diligence; for now 'twill be exceeding apt to grow ſecure, proud and earthly*, Rara virtus eſt humilitas honorata (*ſaith* Bernard) to

see a man humble under prosperity, is one of the greatest rarities in the World. Even a good Hezekiah *could not hide a vain-glorious temper under this temptation, and hence that Caution to* Israel; *Deut.* 6. 10, 11, 12. *And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee in Land which he sware to thy Fathers, to* Abraham, Isaac, *and* Jacob, *to give thee great and goodly Cities, which thou Buildest not, and Houses full of all good things which thou fillest not,* &c. *Then beware lest thou forget the Lord: and indeed so it fell out, for* Jerusalem *waxed fat and kicked,* Deut. 32. 15.

Now then the first Case will be this, *viz.*

1. Case. *How a Christian may keep his heart from Pride and carnal security under the smiles of Providence, and confluence of Creature Comforts?*

There are seven choice helps to secure the heart from the dangerous snares of prosperity, the first is this.

1. *To consider the dangerous insnaring temptations attending a pleasant and prosperous condition: few, yea very few of those that live in the Pleasures and Prosperity of this World, escape everlasting Perdition,* Mat, 19. 24. *'tis easier* (saith Christ) *for a Camel to pass through the eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,* 1. Cor. 1. 26. *not many mighty, not many noble are called.* It might justly make us tremble, when the Scrip-

Scripture tells us in general, that few shall be saved, much more when it tells us, that of that rank and sort of which we are, but few shall be saved. When *Joshuah* called all the Tribes of *Israel* to lot upon them for the discovery of *Achan*, doubtless *Achan* feared; when the Tribe of *Judah* was taken, his fear encreased; but when the family of the *Zarhites* was taken, it was time then to tremble. So when the Scripture comes so near as to tell us that of such a sort of men very few shall escape, 'tis time to look about: *mirror sit potest servary aliquis rectorum*, saith *Chrisostome*, I should wonder if any of the Rulers be saved. O how many have Coached to Hell in the Chariots of earthly pleasure, while others have been whipt to Heaven by the rod of affliction? How few, like the daughter of *Tire* come to Christ with a gift! How few among the rich intreat his favour.

2. *It may yet keep us more humble and watchful in prosperity, if we consider that among Christians many have been much the worse for it*; How good had it been for some of them, if they had never known prosperity when they were in a low condition, how humble, spiritual and heavenly were they? but when advanced, what an apparent alteration hath been upon their spirits; 'twas so with *Israel* when they were in a low con-

dition in the Wilderness; then *Israel* was *Holiness to the Lord, Jer.* 2. 3. but when they come into *Canaan*, and were fed in a fat Pasture, then, *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*, Verse 31. outward gains are ordinarily attended with inward losses, as in a low condition; their civil imployments were wont to have a tang and savour of their Duties, so in an exalted condition, their duties commonly have a tang of the World. He indeed is rich in Grace, whose Graces, are not hindred by his riches, there are but few *Jehoshaphats* in the World, of whom it is said, 2 *Chron.* 17. 5, 6. *He had silver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted up in the ways of God: Commands.* Will not this keep thy heart humble in prosperity, to think how dear many Godly Men have paid for their Riches, that through them they have lost that which all the World cannot purchase: Then in the next place:

3. Keep down thy vain heart by this Consideration. *That God values no man a jot the more for these things.* God values no Man by outward Excellencies, but by inward Graces, they are the internal ornaments of the Spirit which are of great price in Gods eyes, 2 *Pet.* 3. 4. he despises all worldly glory, and accepts no Mans person, *but in every Nation, he that feareth God and work-*

worketh righteousness, is accepted of him, Acts 10. 35. Indeed, if the Judgment of God went by the same rule that mans doth, we might value our selves by these things, and stand upon them: but as one said (when dying) I shall not appear before God as a Doctor, but as a Man; *tantus quisque est, quantus est apud Deum.* So much every man is, and no more, as he is in the Judgment of God. Doth thy heart yet swell? and will neither of the former considerations keep it humble?

4. Then fourthly, Consider, *how bitterly many persons have bewailed their folly when they came to die, that ever they set their hearts upon these things, and heavily wished that they had never known them.* What a sad story was that of *Pius Quintus*, who dying, cried out dispairingly, when I was in a low condition, I had some hopes of Salvation, but when I was advanced to be a *Cardinal*, I greatly doubted it, but since I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Mr. *Spencer* also tells us a real, but sad story, of a rich oppressor, who had scraped up a great Estate for his only Son; when he came to die, he called his Son to him, and said, Son do you indeed love me? the Son answered, that Nature, besides his paternal Indulgence, obliged him to that; then said the Father, express it by this, hold thy finger in the

Candle as long as I am saying a *Pater-Noster*; the Son attempted but could not endure it; upon that the Father brake out into these expressions, Thou canst not suffer the burning of thy Finger for me; but to get this wealth, I have hazarded my Soul for thee, and must burn Body and Soul in Hell for thy sake, thy pains would have been but for a moment, but mine will be unquenchable fire.

5. The heart may be kept humble, by considering of what a clogging nature earthly things are to a Soul heartily engaged in the way to Heaven, they shut out much of Heaven from us at present, though they may not shut us out of Heaven at last. If thou consider thy self under the notion of a stranger in this World, travelling for Heaven and seeking a better Country, thou hast then as much reason to be taken and delighted with these things, as a weary Horse hath with a heavy Cloak-bag: there was a serious truth in that Atheistical scoff of *Julian*, when he took away the Christians Estates, and told them it was to make them fitter for the Kingdom of Heaven.

6. Is thy Spirit for all this flatulent and lofty, then urge upon it *the consideration of that awful day of reckoning, wherein accordingly our receipts of Mercies shall be our accounts for them*: And methinks this should awe and hum-

humble the vainest heart that ever was in the breast of a Saint. Know for a certain, that the Lord records all the Mercies that ever he gave thee, from the beginning to the end of thy life, *Micha.6.5. Remember O my People, from Shittim unto Gilgal*, &c. Yea they are exactly numbred, and recorded, in order to an account; and thy account will be suitable, Luke 12.48. *To whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.* You are but Stewards, and your Lord will come to take an account of you; and what a great account have you to make who have much of this World in your hands: and what swift witnesses will your enemies be against you, if this be the best fruit of them?

7. It is a very humbling consideration, *That the mercies of God should work otherwise upon my spirit than they use to do upon the spirits of others, to whom they come as sanctified mercies from the love of God.* Ah Lord! What a sad consideration is this! enough to lay me in the dust: When I consider (1) That their mercies have greatly humbled them; the higher God hath raised them, the lower they have laid themselves before God. Thus did *Jacob* when God had given him much substance, *Gen.* 32.9, 10. *And* Jacob *said, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and all the truth which thou hast shewed thy servant; for with my staff, I passed over this* Jordan, *and*

now am become two bands. And it was thus with holy *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. When God had confirmed the Promise to him, to build him an house, and not reject him as he did *Saul*, he goes in before the Lord and saith *who am I, and what is my Fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* and so indeed God required, *Deut.* 26. 5. when *Israel* was to bring to God the first fruits of *Canaan*, they were to say, *a Syrian ready to perish was my Father*, &c. Do others raise God the higher for raising them? and the more God raises me, the more shall I abuse him and exalt my self. O what a sad thing is this! (2) Others have freely ascribed the glory of all their enjoyments to God, and magnified, not themselves, but him, for their mercies: So *David* 2 Sam. 26. 26. *Let thy name be magnified, and the house of thy servant be established.* He doth not dye upon the mercy, and suck out the sweetness of it, looking no farther then his own comfort; no, he cares for no mercy except God be magnified in it. *Psa.* 18. 2. when God had delivered him from all his enemies, *the Lord* (saith he) *is my strength and my rock, he is become my salvation.* They did not put the Crown upon their own heads as I do. (3) The mercies of God have been melting mercies unto others, melting their Souls in love to the God of their mercies. So *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. when she received the mercy

mercy of a Son, my Soul (saith she) rejoyceth in the Lord, not in the mercy, but in the God of the mercy: And so *Mary, Luke.* 1.46. *My Soul doth Magnifie the Lord, my Spirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour*, the word signifies to make more room for God. Their hearts were not contracted, but the more enlarged to God: (4) The mercies of God have been mighty restraints to keep others from sin. So *Ezr.* 9. 13. *Seeing thou our God hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy Commandments?* Ingenious Souls have felt the force of the obligations of Love, and Mercy upon them: (5) to conclude, the Mercies of God to others, have been as Oyl to the wheel of their obedience, and make them fitter for service, 2 *Chron.* 17.5. Now if Mercies work contrarily upon my heart, what cause have I to be afraid, that they come not to me in love? I tell you, this is enough to damp the Spirits of any Saint, to see what sweet effects they have had on others, and what sad effects on him.

2. Seal. *The second special Season in the life of a Christian, requiring more than common diligence to his heart, is* the time of adversity; *when Providence frowns upon you, and blasts your outward comforts, then look to your heart, keep them with all diligence from repining against God, our fainting under his hand: for troubles, though sanctified, are*

troubles still; even sweet Briar, and Hay Thistle have their prickles: Jonah was a good Man, and yet how pettish was his heart under affliction? Job was the mirrour of Patience, yet how was his heart discomposed by trouble? you will find it hard to get a composed Spirit under great afflictions, as it is to fix Quick-silver: Oh the hurries and Tumult which they occasion even in the best hearts! well then, the second Case will be this.

2. Case. *How a Christian under great afflictions, may keep his heart from repining or desponding under the hand of God?* Now there are nine special helps I shall here offer, to keep thy heart in this condition; and the first shall be this, to work upon your hearts this great truth.

1. *That by these cross Providences, God is faithfully pursuing the great design of electing Love upon the Souls of his People, and orders all these afflictions as means sanctified to that end.*

Afflictions fall not out by *Casualty*, but by *Counsel*, *Job.* 5. 6. *Eph.* 1. 11. by this Counsel of God they are ordained as means of such spiritual good to Saints, *Is.* 27. 9. *By this shall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged*, &c. Heb. 12. 10. *But he for our profit*, &c. Rom. 8. 28. *All things work together for good*, they are Gods Workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal security of them; and being so,

their nature is changed; they are turned into blessings and benefits, *Psal.* 119.71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* And sure then, thou hast no reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God should concern himself so much in thy good to use any means for the accomplishing of it, *Phil.* 3.11. *Paul could bless God if by any means he might attain the Resurrection of the dead,* my brethren (*saith James*) *count it all joy when you fall into temptation,* Jam. 1.2. My Father is about a design of Love upon my Soul, and do I well to be angry with him? all that he does is in pursuance of, and reference to some eternal glorious ends upon my Soul. O 'tis my ignorance of God's design, that makes me quarrel with him! he saith to thee in this case, as to *Peter, what I do thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know it.*

2. Help. *Though God hath reserved to himself a liberty of afflicting his people, yet he hath tyed up his own hands by promise, never to take away his loving kindness from them.* Can I look that Scripture in the face with a repining discontented Spirit, 2 Sam. 7.14. *I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him, with the rod of Men: Nevertheless my Mercy shall not depart away from him.* O my heart, my haughty heart, dost thou well to be discontented, when God hath given thee the whole Tree,

with

with all the clusters of comfort growing on it? because he suffers the wind to blow down a few leaves; Christians have two sorts of goods, the goods of the Throne, and the goods of the footstool, moveables and immoveables; if God have secured these, never let thy heart be troubled at the loss of those: indeed, if he had cut off his love, or discovenanted my soul, I had reason to be cast down; but this he hath not, he cannot do.

3. *Help.* It is of marvelous efficacy to keep the heart from sinking under affliction, *to call to mind: that thine own father hath the ordering of them:* not a creature moves hand or tongue against thee, but by his permission. Suppose the cup be a bitter cup, yet 'tis the cup which thy Father hath given thee to drink, and canst thou suspect poison to be in that cup which he delivers thee? foolish man, put home the case to thine own heart, consult with thine own bowels, canst thou find in thy heart to give thy Child that which would hurt and undo him? no, thou wouldst as soon hurt thy self as him? *If thou then being evil, knowest how to give good gifts to thy Children,* how much more doth God, *Mat.* 7. 11. the very considerations of his nature, a God of love, pity, and tender mercies, or of his relation to thee, as a Father, Husband, Friend; might be security

enough,

enough, if he had not spoken a word to quiet thee in this case: and yet you have his word too, *Jer.* 25. 6. *I will do you no hurt.* You lie too near his heart to hurt you, nothing grieves him more than your groundless and unworthy suspitions of his designs do; would it not grieve a faithful tender-hearted Physitian, when he hath studied the case of his Patient, prepared the most excellent receipts to save his life, to hear him cry out; Oh he hath undone me, he hath poisoned me; because it gripes and and pains him in the operation? Oh when will you be ingenuous?

4. Help. *God respects you as much in a low, as in a high condition: and therefore it need not so much trouble you to be made low*; nay, to speak home, he manifests more of his love, grace and tenderness, in the time of affliction than prosperity, as God did not at first chuse you, because you were high, so he will not forsake you, because you are low: Men may look shie upon you, and alter their respects as your condition is altered: When Providence hath blasted your estate, your Summer friends may grow strange, as fearful you may be troublesome to them, but will God do so? No, no, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. indeed if adversity and poverty could bar you from access to God, it were a sad condition; but

you

you may go to God as freely as ever. *My God* (saith the Church) *will hear me*, *Micah* 7. Poor *David*, when stript out of all earthly comforts, could yet encourage himself in the Lord his God, and why cannot you? Suppose your Husband or Child had lost all at Sea, and should come to you in rags, Could you deny the relation, or refuse to entertain him? if you would not, much less will God: why then are you so troubled? though your condition be changed, your Fathers love and respects are not changed.

5. Help. *And what if by the loss of outward comforts, God will preserve your souls from the ruining power of temptation: sure then, you have little cause to sink your hearts, by such sad thoughts about them.* Are not these earthly enjoyments, the things that make men shrink and warp in times of tryal: for the love of these, many have forsaken Christ in such an hour, *Mat*. 19. 22. *He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions*; and if this be Gods design; what have I done in quarelling with him about it. We see Marriners in a storm, can throw over-board rich bails of Silk, and precious things, to preserve the vessel and their lives with it, and every one saith, they act prudently; know 'tis usual for Soldiers in a City besieged, to batter down or burn the

fairest

faireſt buildings without the walls in which the enemy may ſhelter in the ſiege, and no man doubts but 'tis wiſely done: ſuch as have gangrened legs or arms, can willingly ſtretch them out to be cut off, and not only thank, but pay the Chyrurgeon for his pains; and muſt God only be repined at for caſting over what would ſink them in a ſtorm? for pulling down that which would advantage your enemy in a Siege of temptation? for cutting off what would endanger your everlaſting life? Oh inconſiderate, ingrateful Man! are not theſe things for which thou grieveſt, the very things that have ruined thouſands of ſouls? Well, what Chriſt doth in this, thou knoweſt not now, but hereafter thou mayeſt.

6. *Help.* It would much ſtay the heart under adverſity, to conſider, *That God by ſuch humbling providences may be accompliſhing that for which you have long prayed, and waited*: And ſhould you be troubled at that? ſay Chriſtian, haſt thou not many Prayers depending before God upon ſuch accounts as theſe? that he would keep thee from ſin: diſcover to thee the emptineſs and inſufficiency of the Creature: That he would kill and mortifie thy luſts, that thy heart may never find reſt in any enjoyment but Chriſt? Why now, by ſuch humbling and impoveriſhing ſtrokes, God may by fulfilling thy

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desire: Wouldst thou be kept from sin? lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns*: Wouldest thou see the Creatures vanity? thy affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered, as in our own experience of it: wouldst thou have thy corruptions mortified? this is the way. Now God takes away the food and fewel that maintained them; for as prosperity begat, and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is a means to kill them. Wouldst thou have the heart to rest no where but in the bosom of God? What better way canst thou imagine providence should take to accomplish thy desire, then by pulling from under thy head, that soft Pillow of Creature-delights on which thou restedst before; and yet thou fretst at this; peevish Child, how dost thou exercise thy Fathers Patience! if he delay to answer thy Prayers, thou art ready to say he regards thee not: if he do that which really answers the scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedst, thou quarellest with him for that, as if instead of answering, he were crossing all thy hopes and aims. Is this ingenuous? Is it not enough that God is so gracious to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so impudent to expect he should do it in the way which thou prescribest?

7. *Help*

7. *Help.* Again, it may stay thy heart if thou consider, *That in these troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didst see the design of, thy Soul would rejoyce.* We poor Creatures are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern how particular Providences work towards Gods end; and therefore like *Isreal* in the Wilderness, are often murmuring because Providence leads us about in a howling Desart, where we are exposed to straits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a City of habitations*, if you could but see how God in his secret Counsel hath exactly laid the whole plot and design of thy salvation; even to the smallest means and circumstances, this way, and by these means such an one shall be saved, and by no other; such a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order; they shall befall him, thus, and thus they shall work for him; could you I say, but discern the admirable harmony of divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other, together with the general respect and influence they all have into the last end; of all the conditions in the World, you would chuse that you are now in; had you liberty to make your own choice. Providence is like a curious piece of Arras, made up of a thousand

sand shreds: which single we know not what to make of, but put together and stitcht up ordinarily, they represent a beautiful history to the eye: as God works all things according to the Counsel of his own Will: So that Counsel of God hath ordained this as the best way to bring about thy Salvation: Such an one hath a proud heart, so many humbling Providences I appoint for him; such an one an earthly heart, so many impoverishing providences for him: Did you but see this, I need say no more to support the most dejected heart.

1. *Help.* Farther it would much conduce to the settlement of your hearts to consider, *That by fretting and discontent you do your selves more injury than all the afflictions you lie under could do.* Your own discontent is that which arms your troubles with a sting, 'tis you that makes your burthen heavy, by strugling under it; could you but lie quiet under the Hand of God, your condition would be much easier and sweeter than it is: *Impatiens ægrotus crudelem facit Medicum.* This makes God lay on more strokes, as a Father will upon a stubborn Child that receives not correction.

Besides, it unfits the Soul to pray over its troubles, or take in the sense of that good which God intends by them; affliction is a Pill, which being wrapt up in patience

tience, and quiet submission, may be easily swallowed; but discontent chews the pill, and so imbitters the Soul; God throws away some comfort which he saw would hurt you, and you will throw away your peace after it; he shoots an Arrow which sticks in your clothes, and as was never intended to hurt, but only to fright you from sin: and you will thrust it onward to the piercing of your very hearts, by despondency and discontent.

9. *Help.* Lastly, If all this will not do, but thy heart (like *Rachel*) still refuses to be comforted or quieted, then consider one thing more; which if seriously pondered, will doubtless do the work; and that is this: *Compare the Condition that thou art now in (and art so much dissatisfied with) with that condition others are, and thy self deservest to be in:* others are roaring in flames, howling under the scourge of vengeance, and amongst them I deserve to be, O my Soul! Is this Hell? Is my condition as the damned? O what would thousands now in hell give to change conditions with me? It is a famous instance which Doctor *Taylor* gives us of the Duke of *Conde*, I have read (saith he) that when the Duke of *Conde* had entred voluntarily into the incommodities of a Religious poverty, he was one day espied and pitied

Great exam. p. 210.

pittied by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of tenderness wished him to be more careful and nutritive of his person, the good Duke answered, Sir, be not troubled; and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences: for I send an *Harbinger* before me, who makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The Lord asked him who was his *Harbinger*? He answered, the knowledg of my self, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better then I deserve, *Why doth the living Man complain*? and thus the heart may be kept from desponding or repining under adversity.

3. Seas. *The third Season calling for more then ordinary diligence to keep the heart, is the time of* Sions *troubles; when the Church, like the ship in which Christ and his Disciples were, is oppressed and ready to perish in the waves of persecution, then good Souls are ready to sink, and be Shipwrackt too, upon the billows of their own fear. I confess, most Men rather need the spur, then the Reins in this case, and yet some sit down as overweighed with the sense of the Churches troubles; the loss of the* Ark *cost old* Eli *his life, the sad posture* Jerusalem *lay in, made good*

Nehemiah

Nehemiahs countenance change in the midst of all the pleasures and accommodations of the Court, Neh. 2. 2. ah this goes close to loyal hearts.

But though God allow, yea, command the most awakened apprehensions of these Calamities, and in such a day call to mourning and weeping, girding with sack-cloath, Isa. 22. 12. and severely threatens the insensible, Amos 6. 1. yet it will not please him to see you sit like pensive Elijah, under the Juniper tree, 1 Kings 19. 4. Ah Lord God! it is enough, take away my life also; no, mourners in Sion you may, and ought to be, but self-tormentors you must not be: complain to God you may, but to complain of God (though but by an unsuitable carriage and the language of your actions) you must not.

3. *Case.* The third case that comes next to be spoken to is this, *How publick and tender hearts may be relieved and supported, when they are even over weighed with the burdensome sence of Sions troubles.* I grant, it is hard for him that preferreth Sion to his chief joy, to keep his heart that it sink not below the due sense of it's trouble; and yet this ought and might be done by the use of such heart-establishing directions as these.

Direct. 1. *Settle this great truth in your hearts, that no trouble befalls* Sion, *but by the permission of* Sions God: *and he permits*

nothing

nothing out of which he will not bring much good at last to his people.

There is as truly a principle of quietness in the permitting, as in the commanding will of God. See in *David*, 2 Sam. 16. 10. *Let him alone, it may be God hath bidden him:* and in Christ, *John* 19. 11. *Thou couldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above*, it should much calm our spirits, that it is the will of God to suffer it; and had not he suffered it, it could never have been as it is.

This very consideration quieted *Job*, *Eli*, *David* & *Hezekia*; that the Lord did it, was enough to them: and why should it not be so to us? if the Lord will have *Sion* plowghed as a field, and her goodly stones lie in the dust; if it be his pleasure that *Antichrist* shall rage longer, and wear out the Saints of the most high; if it be his will that a day of trouble and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of Hosts shall be upon the valley of Vision, that the wicked shall devour the man that is more righteous than he, what are we that we should contest with God? fit it is that we should be resigned up to that will whence we proceeded, and he that made us should dispose of us as he pleaseth: he may do what seemeth good without our consent: doth poor man stand upon equal ground, that he

should

should capitulate with his Creator, or that God should render him an account of any of his matters? it is every way as reasonable we be content however God dispose of us, as that we be obedient to whatsoever he commands us.

But then, if we persue this argument further, by considering that Gods permissions do all meet at last in the real good of his People, this will much more quiet our Spirits. Do the Enemies carry away the good Figs, even the best among the People into Captivity; this looks like a sad providence: but yet, God sends them thither for their good, *Jer.* 24. 5. Doth God take the *Assyrian* as a staff in his hand to beat his People with? those blows are smart, and make them cry; but the end of his so doing is, *that he may accomplish his whole work upon Mount Sion*, Isa. 10. 12. If God can bring much good out of the worst and greatest evil of sin, much more out of temporal afflictions, and it is as evident that he will, as that he can do so. For it is inconsistent with the wisdome of a common Agent, to permit any thing (which he might prevent if he pleased) to cross his great design and end; and can it be imagined that the most wise God should do so?

Well then, as *Luther* told *Melancthon*, *Desinat Philippus esse rector mundi*: so say I

to

to you, let infinite wisdom, power, and love alone, for by these all Creatures are swayed, and actions guided, in reference to the Church. It is none of our work to rule the World, but to submit to him that doth; *non cæco impetu volvuntur rotæ*, the motions of Providence are all Judicious, the wheels are full of eyes: it is enough that the affairs of *Sion* are in a good hand.

2. *Direct.* Ponder this heart-supporting truth, in reference to *Sions* trouble: *that how many troubles soever are upon her, yet her King is in her.*

What? hath the Lord forsaken his Churches? Hath he sold them into the Enemies hand? doth he not regard what evil befals them? that our hearts sink at this rate! is it not too shameful an undervaluing of the great God? and too much magnifying poor impotent Man to fear and tremble at Creatures, whilst God is in the midst of us? the Churches Enemies are many and mighty, let that be granted, yet that Argument with vvhich *Caleb* and *Joshuah* strove to raise their ovvn hearts, is of as much force novv as it vvas then: *The Lord is with us, fear them not*, *Numb.* 14. 9. The Historian tells us, that vvhen *Antigonus* over-heard his Soldiers reckoning hovv many the Enemies vvere, and discouraging one another; he suddenly steps in among them

them with this Question, *And how many* (said he) *do you reckon me for*? Discouraged souls, How many do you reckon the Lord for? Is he not an Over-match for all his Enemies? Is not one Almighty more than many Mighties? Doth his presence stand for nothing with us? *If God be for us, who can be against us*? Rom. 8. 31. What think you was the reason of that great Exploration, *Gideon* made in *Judges* 6. He questions, *vers.* 12. 13. He desires a sign, *v.* 17. and after that, another, *v.* 36. And what was the end of all this, but that he might be sure the Lord was with him, and that he might but write this Motto upon his Ensign, *The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon*? So then, if you can be well assured, the Lord is with his people, you will get thereby above all your discouragements: and that he is so, you need not (with him) desire a sign from Heaven; lo, you have a sign before you, even their marvellous preservation amidst all their Enemies. If God be not with his people, how is it they are not swallowed up quick? Do their Enemies want malice, power, or opportunity? No, but there is an invisible hand upon them. Well then, as it is, *Exod.* 33. 14. Let his presence give us rest; and though the Mountain be hurled into the Sea, though Heaven and Earth mingle together; fear not,

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.

3. Direct. *Ponder the great advantages attending the people of God in an afflicted condition.* If a low and an afflicted state in the World be really best for the Church, then your dejections are not only irrational, but ungrateful. Indeed, if you estimate the Happiness of the Church by its worldly ease, splendor and prosperity, then such times will seem bad for it; but if you reckon its glory to consist in its humility, faith, patience and heavenly mindedness, no condition in the World abounds with advantages for these as an afflicted condition doth. It was not persecutions and prisons, but worldliness and wantonness that was the poyson of the Church; neither was it the earthly glory of its *Professors*, but the blood of its *Martyrs* that was the seed of the Church. The power of godliness did never thrive better than in affliction, and never ran lower than in times of greatest prosperity; when *we are left a poor and afflicted people, then we learn to trust in the name of the Lord*; *Zeph.* 3. 12. What say you Sirs? Is it indeed for the Saints advantage to be weaned from the love and delights of ensnaring, worldly vanities; to be quickned and prick forward with more haste to Heaven, to have clearer discoveries of their own hearts, to be taught

to

to pray more fervently, frequently, ſpiritually, to look and long for the reſt to come more ardently? If this be their advantage, experience teacheth us, that no condition is ordinarily bleſt with ſuch fruits as theſe, like an afflicted condition.

And is it well done then to repine and droop becauſe your Father conſults more the advantage of your ſouls, than the pleaſing of your humours; becauſe he will bring you a nearer way to Heaven than you are willing to go? Is this a due requital of his love, who is pleaſed ſo much to concern himſelf in your welfare? which is more than he will do for thouſands in the World, upon whom he will not lay a Rod, or ſpend an affliction for their good, *Hoſ.* 4. 17. *Mat.* 15. 14. But alas! We judge by ſenſe, and reckon things good or evil, according to what we for the preſent can taſte and feel in them.

4. Direct. *Take heed that you overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidſt all their trouble.*

'Tis pity that our tears on the account of our troubles, ſhould ſo blear and blind our eyes, that we ſhould not ſee our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not inſiſt upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniences, and accommodations, which you enjoy, even above what

Christ and his precious servants, of whom the World was not worthy, ever had.

But what say you to pardon of sin, Interest in Christ, the Covenant of Promises, and an Eternity of happiness in the presence of God, after a few days are over? O, that ever a people entituled to such mercies as these, should droop under any temporal affliction, or be so much concerned for the frowns of men, and loss of trifles! You have not the smiles of great Men, but you have the favour of the great God: You are, it may be, cast back in your estates, but thereby furthered in spirituals. You cannot live so bravely, plentifully and easily as before, but still you may live as holy and heavenly as ever. Will you then grieve so much for these *circumstantials*, as to forget your *substantials*? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the Churches true Riches are laid out of the reach of all its Enemies: they make you poor, but not miserable. What though God do not distinguish in its outward dispensations betwixt his own and others; yea, What though his Judgments single out the best, and spare the worst? What though an *Abel* be killed in love, and a *Cain* survive in hatred; a bloody *Dyonisius* die in his bed, and a good *Josiah* fall in battel? What though the belly of the Wicked be filled wit

with hid Treasures, and the teeth of the Saints broken with Gravel-stones, yet still here is much matter of praise, for electing love hath distinguished though common Providence did not, and whilst prosperity and impunity slay the wicked, even slaying and adversity shall benefit and save the righteous.

5. Direct. *Beleive that how low soever the Church be plunged under the waters of adversity, it shall assuredly rise again.* Fear not, for as sure as Christ arose the third day, notwithstanding the Seal and watch that was upon him, so sure the Church shall arise out of all her troubles, and lift up its Victorious head above all its enemies: there's no fear of ruining that People that thrive by their losses, and multiplie by being diminished. O be not too quick to bury the Church before she be dead! stay till Christ hath tried his skill before you give it up for lost; the Bush may be all in a flame, but shall never be consumed, and that because of the good will of him that dwelleth in the Bush.

6. Direct. *Record the famous instances of Gods care and tenderness over his people in former straits.* Christ hath not suffered it to be devoured yet; for above these 1600 years the Christian Church hath lived in affliction, and yet it is not consumed; ma-

ny a wave of perſecution hath gone over it, and yet it is not drowned; many deſigns to ruine it, and hitherto none hath proſpered: this is not the firſt time that *Hamans* and *Achitophels* have ploted its ruine; that an *Herod* hath ſtretch'd out his hand to vex it. Still it hath been preſerved from, ſupported under, or delivered out of all its troubles: and is it not as dear to God as ever? Is not he as able to ſave it now, as formerly? though we know not whence Deliverance ſhould riſe; *Yet the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9.

7. *Direct.* If you can fetch no comfort from any of the former Arguments, then in the laſt place, *try whether you cannot draw ſome comfort out of your very trouble.* Surely this trouble of yours is a good argument of your integrity; unity is the ground of Sympathy, if you had not ſome rich adventure in that ſhip you would not tremble as you do when it is in danger: Beſides this frame of Spirit may afford you this argument, that if you be ſo ſenſible of the Churches troubles, *Jeſus Chriſt* is much more ſenſible of, and ſolicitous about it than you can be; and he will have an eye of favour upon them that mourn for it, *Iſa.* 57. 18.

4. Seaſon. *The fourth ſpecial Seaſon for expreſſing our utmoſt diligence, is keeping our hearts in time of danger and publick diſtracti-*

on:

on: on such times the best hearts are but too apt to be surprized by slavish fear, it is not easie to secure the heart against Distraction *in times of common* Destruction: *if* Syra *be confederate with* Ephraim, *how doth the hearts of the house of* David *shake, even as the trees of the wood which are shaken with the wind,* Isa. 7. 2. *when there are ominous signs in the heavens, on the Earth distress of Nations, with perplexity, the Sea and Waves roaring, then the hearts of men fail for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the Earth,* Luke 21. 25, 26. *even a* Paul *himself may complain of sighings within, when there are fears without,* 2 Cor. 7. 5.

But my Brethren these things ought not to be so: Saints should be of a more raised spirit: so was *David* when his heart was kept in a good frame, *Psal.* 27. 1. *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be a fraid?* Let none but the servants of sin be the slaves of fear, let them that have delight in evil, fear evil, *impius tantum metuit, quantum nocuit.* O let not that which God hath threatned as a Judgment upon the wicked, ever seize upon the Breast of the Righteous, *I will send* (saith God) *faintness into their heart in the land of their enemies, and the sound of a*

shaking leaf shall chase them, Lev. 26. 36. O what poor spirited men were these, to flie at the shaking leaf! which makes a pleasant, and not a terrible noise, and is in it self a kind of natural musick, but to a guilty Conscience the whistling leaves are Drums and Trumpets: *but God hath not given us the spirit of Fear, but of love and of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7. A sound mind as it stands there is opposition to the Spirit of fear is an unwounded Conscience, not infirmed by guilt, and this should make a man as bold as a Lyon. I know it cannot be said of a Saint what God spake of *Leviathan*, that he is made without fear: there is a natural fear in every man, and it's as impossible to be wholly put off, as the Body it self is: *'tis a perturbation of the mind rising from the apprehensions of approaching danger*; and as long as dangers can approach us, we shall find some perturbations within us. 'Twas not my purpose to commend to you a *Stoical apathy*, nor yet to take you off from such a degree of cautional preventative fear as may fit you for troubles, and be serviceable to your Soul. There is a provident fear that opens our Eyes to foresee danger, and quickens to a prudent and lawful use of means to prevent it, such was *Joabs* fear, *Gen.* 32. 7. 9, 10. *&c.* but it is the *fear of diffidence*. I persuade you to keep your hearts from

from that Tyrannical passion which invades the heart in times of danger, distracts, weakens, and unfits the heart for duty, drives men upon unlawful means, and brings a snare with it. Well then, the 4*th* case will be this.

Case 4. "*How a Christian may keep his* "*Heart from distracting and tormenting fears* "*in times of great and threatning dangers.*

Now there are fourteen excellent Rules or Helps for the keeping of the heart from sinful fear when eminent dangers threaten us: And the first is this;

1 Rule. *Look upon all the Creatures as in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions, limitsng, restraining, and determining them all at his pleasure.*

Get this great truth well settled by faith in your hearts, it will marvellously guard them against slavish fears, the 1 of *Ezek.* contains an admirable *Scheme* or *Draught* of Providence; there you may see the living Creatures who move the wheels, *viz.* the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Christ, who sits upon the Throne to receive new orders and instructions from him, *ver.* 24,25,26. and in *Rev.*6. you read of white, black, and red Horses, which are nothing else but the instruments which God employs in executing his Judgments in the World, as Wars, Pestilence and Death; but when these Horses are

prancing and trampling up and down the World; here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the reins in hand. Wicked Men are sometimes like mad Horses, they would stamp the People of God under their feet, but that the Bridle of Providence is in their Lips, *Job* 1.11,12. A Lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the Lion in the Keepers hand.

2. Rule. *Remember that this God in whose hand all the Creatures are, is your Father, and is much more tender over you than you are or can be over you selves: He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of mine Eye.*

Let me ask the most timerous Woman, whether there be not a vast difference betwixt the sight of a drawn Sword in the hand of a bloody Ruffian, and the same *Sword* in the hand of her own tender Husband: As great a difference there is in looking upon Creatures by an eye of sense, and looking on them as in the hand of your God by an eye of Faith: That is a sweet Scripture to this purpose, *Isa.* 54.5. *Thy Maker is thine Husband. The Lord of Hosts is his Name*; He is Lord of all the Hosts of Creatures in the World: who would be afraid to pass through an Army, though all the Soldiers should turn their Swords and Guns towards him, if the General of that Army where his Friend or Father; I

have

have met with an excellent Story of a Religious young Man, who being at Sea with many other passengers in a great storm, and they being half dead with fear, he only was observed to be very chearful, as if he had been but little concerned in that danger, one of them demanding a reason of his chearfulness; *Oh*, said he, *'tis because the Pilot of the Ship is my Father.* Consider Christ, first as the King and Supream Lord over the Providential Kingdom, and then as your Head, Husband and Friend, and thou wilt quickly say, *Return unto thy rest O my soul.* This Truth will make you cease trembling, and fall a singing in the midst of dangers, *Psal.* 47.7. *The Lord is King of all the earth, sing ye praise with understanding*, or as the *Hebrew* is, *every one that hath understanding*, viz. of this *Heart* reviving and establishing Doctrine of the Dominion of the Father over all the Creatures.

3. Rule. *Urge upon your hearts the prohibition of Christ in this Case; and let your hearts stand in awe of the violations of them.*

He charged you not to fear, *Luke* 21.9. *When you shall hear of Wars and commotions, see that ye be not terrified.* And *Phil.* 1.28. *In nothing be terrified by your Adversaries:* yea, in *Matth.* 10.26, 28, 31. and within the compass of six Verses, our Saviour commands us thrice, *not to fear man.* Doth

every

every big word of proud duſt and aſhes make thee afraid? Doth the Voice of a man make thee tremble: and ſhall not the Voice of God? If thou art of ſuch a fearful and timerous ſpirit, how is it that thou feareſt not to diſobey the flat commands of *Jeſus Chriſt*? Methinks the Command of Chriſt ſhould have as much power to claim, as the voice of a poor worm to terrifie thy heart, *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13. *Even I am he that comforteth you, who art thou that thou ſhouldeſt be afraid of man that ſhall die? and of the Son of Man that ſhall be made as the graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker?* We cannot fear Creatures ſinfully, till we have forgotten God, did we remember what he is, and what he hath ſaid, we ſhould not be of ſuch feeble ſpirits: bring thy heart to this *Dilemma* in times of danger, if I let into my As g[illegible] the ſlaviſh fear of Man, I muſt let out on Cre[illegible]erential awe and fear of God: and [illegible]ng on [illegible]ſt off the fear of the Almighty for [illegible] an [illegible]wns of a man? Shall I lift up proud duſt above the great God? Shall I run upon a certain ſin, to ſhun a probable danger? Oh keep thy heart by that conſideration.

4. Rule. *Remember how much needleſs trouble your vain fears have brought upon you formerly, and you have diſquieted your ſelves to no purpoſe.*

Iſa. 51. 13. *And haſt feared continually*

becauſe

because of the oppressor, as if he were ready to devour: and where is the fury of the Oppressor? He seemed ready to devour, but yet you are not devoured; I have not brought upon you the thing what you feared; you have wasted your spirits, disordered your souls, and weakened your hands, and all this to no purpose. You might have all this while enjoyed your peace, and possessed your souls in patience. And here I cannot but observe a very deep policy of Satan managing a design against the Soul by these vain fears: I call them vain in regard of the frustration of them by Providence, but certainly they are not vain as to the end Satan aims at in raising them, for herein he acts as Soldiers use to do in the Siege of a Garrison, who on purpose to wear out the Besieged by constant watchings, and thereby unfit them to make resistance when they storm it in earnest, do every night give it false Alarms which though they come to nothing, notably serve this further design of [illegible] my. O when will you beware of Satans devices.

5. Rule. Consider solemnly, *that though the things you fear should really fall out, yet there is more evil in your own fear then in the thing feared.*

And that not only, as the least evil of sin is worse than the greatest evil of suffering; but

but as this sinful fear hath really more torment and trouble in it, than is in that condition you are so much afraid of, fear is both a multiplying and tormenting passion; it represents troubles much greater than they are, and so tortures and wracks the Soul much worse then when the suffering it self comes. So it was with *Israel* at the Red Sea, they cried out and were sore afraid till they put foot into the Water, and then a passage was opened through those Waters which they thought would have drowned them. Thus it is with us, we looking through the Glass of a carnal fear, upon the waters of trouble, the swelling of *Jordan*, cry out; Oh they are unfordable! we must need perish in them: But when we come into the midst of those Floods indeed we find the Promise made good, *God will make a way to escape*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. Thus it was with the blessed *Bilney*, when he would make a trial by putting his finger to the Candle, and not able to indure that, he cried out, What, cannot I bear the burning of a finger! How then shall I be able to bear the burning of my whole Body to morrow? And yet when that morrow came could go chearfully into the flames with that Scripture in his mouth, *Isa.* 43. 1,2,3. *Fear not for I have redeemed thee? I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine? when*

thou

thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee, when thou walkest through the Fire thou shalt not be burnt.

6 Rule. *Consult the many precious promises which are written for your support and comfort in all dangers.*

These are your refuges to which you may fly and be safe, *When the arrows of danger fly by night, and destruction wasteth at Noon-day.* There are particular Promises suited to particular Cases and Exigencies, and there are general Promises reaching all Cases and Conditions: Such are these, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things shall work together for good,* &c. And *Eccles.* 8. 12. *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet it shall be well with them that fear the Lord,* &c. *Could you but believe the Promises, your heart should be established,* 2 *Chron.* 20. 29. Could you but plead them with God, as *Jacob* did, *Gen.* 33. 12. *Thou said'st, I will surely do thee good,* &c. they would relieve you in every distress.

Object. *But that promise was made personally and by name to him, are not these to me?*

Answ. If *Jacobs* God be your God, you have as good an interest in them as he had. The Church a thousand years after that transaction between God and *Jacob*, applied that which God spake to him, as if it had been spoken to themselves, *Hos.* 12. 4. *He found*

found him in Bethel, *and there he spoke with us.*

7. Rule. *Quiet your trembling hearts by recording and consulting your past experiences of the care and faithfulness of God in former distresses.*

These experiences are food for your Faith in a wilderness condition, *Psal.* 74. 14. By this *David* kept his heart in time of danger 1 *Sam.* 17. 37. and *Paul* his, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. It was sweetly answered by *Silentiarius*, when one told him, that his enemies way-laid him to take away his life, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* If God take no care of me, how have I escaped hitherto; you may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones, for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now mark how *Moses* pleads on that account with God, *Num.* 14. 19. *Pardon I beseech thee the iniquity of this People, as thou hast forgiven them from* Egypt *until now.* He doth not say as men do, Lord this is the first fault, thou hast not been troubled before to sign their pardon; but Lord, because thou hast pardoned them so often; I beseech thee pardon them once again. So in new straits, Lord thou hast often heard, helpt, and saved, in former fears, therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine Arm is not shortned.

8. Rule. *Be well satisfied that you are in the*

the way of your duty, and that will beget holy courage in times of danger.

Who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good? 1. Pet. 3. 13. Or, if any dare attempt it, *you may boldly commit your selves to God in well doing,* 1 Pet. 4. 19. 'Twas this consideration that raised *Luther*'s Spirit above all fear: *In the cause of God* (said he) *I am, and ever shall be stout; herein I assume this Title,* Cedo nulli, *a good cause will bear up a man's spirit bravely.* Hear the saying of a *Heathen,* to the shame of cowardly *Christians*: When the Emperour *Vespasian* had commanded *Eluidius Priscus* not to come to the Senate; or if he did to speak nothing but what he would have him; the Senator returned this noble answer: *That as he was a Senator, it was fit he should be at the Senate; and if being there he were required to give his advice, he would speak freely that which his Conscience commanded him.* The Emperor threatning that then he should die, he answered; *Did I ever tell you that I was immortal? Do you what you will, and I will do what I ought: it is in your power to put me to death unjustly, and in me to die constantly.* *Char.* of Wisdom, p. 358.

Righteousness is a Breast-plate, the Cause of God will pay your experiences; let them tremble whom danger finds out of the way of duty.

9 Rule

9. Rule. *Get your Consciences sprinkled with the Blood of Christ from all guilt, and that will set you hearts above all fear.*

'Tis guilt upon the conscience that softens and cowardizes our Spirits; *The righteous is bold as a Lyon*, Prov. 28. 1. 'Twas guilt in *Cain*'s Conscience that made him cry, *Every one that meets me will slay me*, Gen. 4. 14. A guilty Conscience is more terrified with conceited dangers than a pure Conscience is with real ones. A guilty sinner carries a witness against himself in his own Bosom. 'Twas guilty *Herod* that cried out, *John Baptist is risen from the dead.* Such a Conscience is the Devils Anvil, on which he fabricates all those swords and spears, with which the guilty sinner pierces and wounds himself. Guilt is to danger what fire is to Gun-powder; a man need not fear to walk among many barrels of powder, if he have no Fire about him.

10. Rule. *Exercise holy trust in times of greatest Distress.*

Make it your business to trust God with your lives and comforts, and then your heart will be at rest about them. So did *David*, *Psal.* 57. 3. *at what time I am afraid, I will think on thee. q. d.* Lord, if at any time a storm rise, I will make bold to shelter from it under the covert of his wings. Go to God by acts of faith and Trust, and never

never doubt but he will secure you, *Isa.* 62. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.* God takes it well when thou comest to him thus; Father my Life, my Liberty, or estate, are hunted after, and I cannot secure them: Oh, let me leave them in thy hand: *the poor leaveth himself with thee*; and, doth his God fail him? No; *Thou art the helper of the Fatherless*, *Psal.* 10. 14. that is, thou art the helper of the destitute one, that hath none to go to but God. And that is a sweet Scripture, *Psal.* 112. 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord:* He doth not say, his ear shall be priviledged from the report of evil tidings; he may hear as sad tidings as other men, but his heart shall be priviledged from the terror of those tidings, *his heart is fixed.*

11. Rule. *Consult the honour of Religion more, and your personal safety less.*

Is it for the honour of Religion (think you) that Christians should be as timerous as Hares to start at every sound? Will not this tempt the World to think, that whatever you talk yet your principles are no better than other mens? O! what mischiefs may the discoveries of your fears before them do? 'Twas a noble saying of *Nehemiah*, Chap. 6. 11. *Should such a man as I flee?*

and

and who being as I am, should flee? Were it not better you should die, than that the World should be prejudiced against Christ by your example; For alas! how apt is the World (who Judge more by what they see in your practices, than by what they understand of your Principles) to conclude from your timerousness, that how much soever you commend Faith, and talk of Assurance, yet you dare trust to these things no more than they, when it comes to the tryal. O! let not your fears lay such a stumbling-block before the blind World.

12. *He that will secure his heart from fear, must first secure the eternal interest of his soul in the hands of Jesus Christ.*

When this is done, then you may say *Now World do thy worst.* You will not be very solicitous about a vile Body, when you are once assured it shall be well to all Eternity with your precious Souls. *Fear not them* (saith Christ) *that can kill the Body, and after that have no power that they can do.* The assured Christian may smile with contempt upon all his Enemies, and say, *Is this the worst that you can do?* What say you Christians? Are you assured that your Souls are safe that within a few moments of your dissolution, they shall be received by Christ into everlasting habitations? Well, if you be sure of that never trouble your selves about

about the instrument and means of your dissolution.

Object. *Oh, but a violent death is terrible to Nature.*

Answ. But what matter is it, when thy Soul is in Heaven, whether it were let out at thy mouth, or at thy throat? Whether thy familiar friends, or barbarous enemies stand about thy dead body, and close thine eyes? Alas, it is not worth the makeng so much ado about: *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo cum anima sit in cœlo?* Thy Soul shall not be sensible in Heaven, how thy Body is used on Earth: No, it shall be swallowed up in life.

13. Rule. *Learn to quench all slavish Creature-fears, in the reverential fear of God.*

This is a Cure by diversion. 'Tis a rare piece of Christian Wisdom to turn those passions of the *soul* which most predominate, into spiritual Channels, to turn natural anger into spiritual zeal, natural mirth into holy chearfulness, and natural fear into an holy dread and awe of God. This method of Cure Christ prescribes in that fore-mentioned place, *Mat.* 10. like to which is that, *Isa.* 8. 12, 13. *Fear not their Fear*: But how shall we help it? Why, *Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and your dread.* Natural fear may be allayed for present by natural reason, or the removal

of

of the occasion; but then 'tis but like a Candle blown out with a puff of breath, which is easily blown in again; but if the fear of God extinguish it, then 'tis like a Candle quencht in water, which cannot easily be re-kindled.

14. Rule. Lastly, *Pour out those fears to God in prayer, which the Devil and your own unbelief pour in upon you in times of danger.*

Prayer is the best out-let to fear: where is the Christian that cannot set his *probatum est* to this direction? I will give you the greatest example in the World to encourage you in the use of it, even the example of Jesus Christ, *Mark* 14. 32. When the hour of his danger and death drew nigh: He gets into the Garden, separates from the Disciples, and there wrestles mightily with God in Prayer, even unto an Agony; in reference to which, the Apostle saith, *Heb.* 5. 7. *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong cries and tears, to him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared:* He was heard as to the strength and support to carry him through it, though not as to deliverance, or exemption from it.

Now, Oh, that these things might abide with you, and be reduced to practice in these evil days, that many trembling souls may be established by them.

5. Seal

5. Seas. *The fifth season to excite this diligence in keeping the heart, in the time of straights, and outward pinching wants; although at such times we should complain to God, and not of God (The Throne of Grace being erected for a time of need,* Heb. 4. 16.) *yet when the waters of relief run low, and wants begin to pinch hard, how prone are the best hearts to distrust the Fountain! When the Meal in the Barrel, and Oyl in the Cruise are almost spent, our faith and patience are almost spent too: Now 'tis difficult to keep down the proud and unbelieving heart in an holy quietude and sweet submission at the foot of God. 'Tis an easie thing to talk of trusting God for daily Bread, while we have a full Barn or Purse; but to say as the Prophet* Habakkuk, Ch. 3. 17. Though the Fig-tree should not blossom, neither Fruit be in the Vine, *&c.* Yet will I rejoyce in the Lord. *Sure this is not easie.* The fifth Case therefore shall be this.

5. Case. *How a Christian may keep his heart from distrusting God, or repining against him when outward wants are either felt or feared.*

This Case deserves to be seriously pondred, and especially to be studied now; since it seems to be the design of Providence to empty the People of God of their Creaturefulness, and acquaint them with those straits which hitherto they have been altogether strangers to. Now

Now to secure the heart from the forementioned danger attending this condition, these following Considerations, through the blessing of the Spirit, may prove effectual. And the first is this.

1. Consid. *That if God reduce you to straits and necessities, yet he deals no otherwise therein with you, than he hath with some of the choicest and holiest men that ever lived.*

Your Condition is not singular, though you have hitherto been strangers to wants; other Saints have daily conversed, and been familiarly acquainted with them. Hear what blessed *Paul* speaks, not of himself only, but in the names of other Saints, reduced to like exigencies, 1 *Cor.* 4. 11. *Even to this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted; and have no certain dwelling-place.* To see such a man as *Paul* going up and down the World with naked back, and empty belly, and not a house to put his head in, one that was so far above thee in Grace and Holiness, one that did more service for God in a day, than perhaps thou hast done him all thy days; and yet thou repinest as if hardly dealt with! Have you forgot what necessities and straits, even a *David* hath suffered? How great were his straits and necessities, 1 *Sam.* 25. 8. *Give, I pray thee* (saith he to *Nabal*) *whatsoever cometh to thy hand, to thy servants, and*

to thy Son David. Renowned *Muscolus* was forced to dig in the Town-ditch for a maintenance. Famous *Ainsworth* (as I have been credibly informed) forced to sell the bed he lay on, to buy him bread. But what speak I of these: Behold a greater than any of them, even the Son of God, *who is the Heir of all things, and by whom the worlds were made:* yet sometime would have been glad of any thing, having nothing to eat, *Mark* 11. 12. *And on the morrow when they were come from* Bethany, *he was hungry; and seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came if haply he might find* [*any thing*] *thereon.*

Well then, hereby God hath set no mark of hatred upon you; neither can you infer the want of love from the want of bread. When thy repining heart puts the question, Was there ever any sorrow like unto mine? Ask these worthies, and they will tell thee, though they did not complain and fret as thou dost, yet they were driven to as great straits as thou art.

2. Consid. *If God leave you not in this necessitous condition without a Promise, you have no reason to repine or despond under it.*

That is a sad condition indeed to which no Promise belongs. I remember Mr. *Calvin* upon these words, *Isa.* 9. 1. *Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation,* &c. Slaves they doubt, in what

ſenſe the darkneſs of the Captivity was not ſo great, as the leſſer incurſions made by *Tiglar Pileſer*. In the Captivity the City was deſtroyed, and the Temple burnt with fire, there was no compariſon in the affliction; but yet the darkneſs ſhould not be ſuch, and the reaſon (ſaith he) is this, *huic certam promiſſionem eſſe additam, cum in prioribus nulla eſſet*, (i. e.) there was a certain Promiſe, made to this, but none to the other.

'Tis better to be as low as a Hell with a Promiſe, than in Paradiſe without one. Even the darkneſs of Hell it ſelf would be comparatively no darkneſs at all; were there but a Promiſe to enlighten it. Now God hath left many ſweet Promiſes for the Faith of his poor people to feed on in this condition, ſuch as theſe, *Pſal.* 34. 9, 10. *O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him: the Lyons do lack, and ſuffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord ſhall want nothing that is good*, Pſal. 33. 18, 19. *The eye of the Lord is upon the righteous to keep them alive in famine*, Pſal. 48. 11. *No good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly*, Rom. 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely forgive us all things?* Iſa. 41. 17. *When the poor and the needy ſeek water, and their is none,*

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their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear, I the God of Israel will not forsake them, Here you see first their extreme wants, water being put even for the necessaries of *life*; (2) their certain relief, *I the Lord will hear them*; in which it is supposed, that they cry unto him in their straits; and he hears their cry.

Having therefore these Promises, Why should not your mistrustful hearts conclude like *Davids*, Psal. 23. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*

Object. *But these promises imply conditions; if they were absolute, they would afford more satisfaction.*

Sol. What are these tacit conditions you speak of, but these? (1) That either he will supply or sanctifie your wants. (2) That you shall have so much as God sees fit for you, and doth this trouble you? Would you have the Mercy whether sanctified or no? Whether God sees it fit for you or no? Methinks the appetites of Saints after earthly things should not be so ravenous, to seize greedily upon any enjoyment, not caring how they have it.

But oh, when wants pinch, and we see not whence supplies should come, then our Faith in the Promise shakes, and we like murmering *Israel* cry, *He gave Bread, can he give water also?* O unbelieving hearts!

When did his Promises fail? Whoever trusted them and was ashamed? May not God upbraid thee with thy unreasonable infidelity, as *Jer.* 2. 31. *Have I been a Wilderness unto you?* &c. or as Christ said to the Disciples, *Since I was with you, lacked you any thing?* Yea; may you not upbraid yourselves, may you not say with good old *Policarp*, thus many years have I served Christ, and found him a good Master; indeed, he may deny what your wantonness, but not what your real wants call for; he will not regard the cry of your lusts, nor yet despise the cry of your faith: though he will not indulge and humour your wanton appetites, yet he will not violate his own faithful Promises. These Promises are your best security for eternal life, and 'tis strange if they should not satisfie you for daily bread: remember ye the words of the Lord, and solace your hearts with them amidst your wants. 'Tis said of *Epicurus*, that in the dreadful fits of the Cholick, he often refreshed himself *ob memoriam inventorum*, by calling to mind his inventions in Philosophy; and of *Passidionus* the Philosopher, that in a great fit of the Stone, he solaced himself with discourses of Moral Vertue; and when the pain twinged him, he would say, *nihil agis dolor quamvis sis molestus numquam confitebor te esse malum*: O pain, tho

doſt nothing, though thou art a little troubleſom, I will never conſeſs thee to be evil. If upon ſuch grounds as theſe, they could ſupport themſelves under ſuch grinding and racking pains, and even delude their diſeaſes by them, how much rather ſhould the precious promiſes of God, and the ſweet Experiences which have gone along ſtep by ſtep with them, make you forget all your wants, and comfort you over every ſtrait!

3. Conſid. *If it be bad now, it might have been worſe; hath God denied thee the comforts of this Life, he might have denied thee Chriſt, Peace and Pardon alſo, and then thy caſe had been woful indeed.* You know God hath done ſo to millions in the world: How many ſuch wretched objects may your eyes behold every day, that have no comfort in hand, nor yet in hope, are miſerable here, and will be ſo to eternity? that have a bitter Cup, and nothing to ſweeten it, no, not ſo much as any hope that it will be better. But it is not ſo with you, though you be poor in this World, *yet rich in Faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promiſed, James* 2. 5. O learn to ſet ſpiritual riches over againſt temporal poverty. Ballance all your preſent troubles with your ſpiritual priviledges. Indeed if God had denied your ſouls the Robes of Righteouſneſs to cloath them, the hidden Manna to feed them; the

heavenly Mansions to receive them; if your souls were left destitute as well as your bodies, you might well be pensive, but this consideration hath enough to bring the considering Soul to rest under any outward strait. 'Twas bravely said by *Luther*, when want began to pinch him, *Let us be contented with our hard fair* (saith he) *for do not we feast with Angels upon Christ the bread of Life? and blessed be God* (saith Paul) *who hath abounded to us in all spiritual Blessing*, Eph. 1. 3.

4. Consid. *This affliction though great, is not such an affliction, but God hath far greater, with which he chastises the dearly beloved of his Soul in this World, and should he remove this, and inflict those, you would account your present state, a very comfortable state, and bless God to be as now you are.*

What think you Sirs? should God remove your present troubles, supply your outward wants, give you the desire of your hearts in Creature-Comforts; but hide his face from you, shoot his Arrows into your souls, and cause the venom of them to drink up your Spirits? Should he leave you but a few days to the buffeting of Satan, and his blasphemous injections? should he hold your eyes but a few nights awaking with horrors of Conscience, tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day; Should he lead you through

through the Chambers of Death? Shew you the vision of darkness? and make his terrors set themselves in array against you, then tell me if you would not count it a choice mercy to be back again in your former necessitous condition, with peace of Consciences, and count bread and water with Gods favour a happy state? O then! take heed of repining. Say not, God deals hardly with you, lest you provoke him to convince you by your own sense and feeling, that he hath worse Rods than these for unsubmissive and froward Children.

5. Consid. *If it be bad now, it will be better shortly.*

O keep thy heart by that Consideration! The Meal in the Barrel is almost spent; well, be it so, why should that trouble me? If I am almost beyond the need and use of all these things. The travellor hath spent all his Money, but a shilling or two left, Well (saith he) though my Money be almost spent, yet my Journey is almost finished too; I am near home, and then shall be fully supplied. If there be no Candles in the house, yet it is a comfort to think that it is almost day, and then there will be no need of Candles. I am afraid Christian, thou mis-reckonest thy self, when thou thinkst my provision is almost spent, and I have a great way to travel, many years to live, and

nothing to live upon it may be not half so many as thou ſuppoſeſt: in this be confident, if thy proviſion be ſpent, either freſh ſupplies are coming (though thou ſeeſt not from whence) for thou art nearer thy journies end than thou reckoneſt thy ſelf to be. Deſponding Soul, doth it become a man or woman travelling upon the road to that heavenly City, and almoſt arrived there, within a few days journey of his Fathers houſe, where all his wants ſhall be ſuplied, to take on thus about a little meat, drink or cloaths, which he fears he ſhall want by the way? it was a noble ſaying of the 40 *Martyrs*, famous in the *Eccleſiaſtical ſtory*, when turned out naked in a froſty night to be ſtarved to death; with theſe words they comforted one another δεῖμος ὁ χεῖμων, &c. the winter indeed is ſharp and cold, but Heaven is warm and comfortable! here we ſhiver for cold, but *Abrahams* boſom will make amends for all.

Object. 1. *But I may die for want.*

Sol. (1.) Whoever did ſo? where were the Righteous forſaken? (2.) If ſo, your journey is ended, and you fully ſupplied.

Obj. 2. *But I am not ſure of that, were I ſure of Heaven, it were another matter.*

Sol. Are you not ſure of that? then you have other matters to trouble your ſelves about than theſe: Methinks theſe ſhould be

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the leaſt of all your cares. I do not find that Souls perplexed and troubled about the want of Chriſt, pardon of ſin, *&c.* are uſually very anxious, or ſolicitous about theſe things. He that ſeriouſly puts ſuch queſtions as theſe; *What ſhall I do to be ſaved? How ſhall I know my ſin is pardoned?* Doth not trouble himſelf with, *What ſhall I eat? What ſhall I drink?* Or, *Wherewithal ſhall I be cloathed?*

6. Conſid. *Doth it become the Children of ſuch a Father to diſtruſt his All ſufficiency, or repine againſt any of his Diſpenſations?*

Do you well to queſtion his care and love upon every new exigence? Say, have you not been aſhamed of this formerly? Hath not your Father's ſeaſonable proviſions for you in former ſtraits, put you to the bluſh; and made you reſolve, never to queſtion his Love and Care any more, and yet will now renew your unworthy ſuſpicions of him again? Diſingenious Child, reaſon thus with thy ſelf; If I periſh for want of what is good and needful for me, it muſt either be becauſe my Father knows not my wants, or hath not wherewith to ſupply them; or elſe regards not what becomes of me. Which of theſe ſhall I charge upon him? Not the firſt, for, *Mark* 6. 32. *My Father knows what I have need of*; my condition is not hid from him: Nor the ſecond; for, *The earth is the*

Lord's, and the fulness of it, Psal. 24. 1. His Name is *God All-sufficient*, Gen. 17. 1. Not the last; for, *As a Father pities his Children, so the Lord pities them that fear him*, Psal. 103. 83. *The Lord is exceeding pitiful, and of tender mercy*, Jam. 5. 11. *He hears the young Ravens when they cry*, Job 38. 41. And will he not hear me? *Consider* (saith Christ) *the Fowls of the Air*, Mat. 6. 26. Not the Fowls at the door, that are every day fed by hand; but the Fowls of the Air, that have none to provide for them. Doth he feed and cloath his Enemies, and will he forget his Children? He heard the very cry of *Ishmael* in distress, *Gen.* 21. 17. O my unbelieving heart! Dost thou yet doubt? Remember *Hagar* and the Child.

7. Consid. *Your Poverty is not your Sin, but your afflictions only, if by sinful means you have not brought it upon your selves; and if it be an affliction, it may be born the easier for that.*

'Tis hard indeed to bear an affliction coming upon us as the fruit and punishment of sin: when men are under trouble upon that account, they use to say, Oh! if it were but a single affliction coming from the hand of God, by way of tryal, I could bear it; but I have brought it upon my self by sin: it comes as the punishment of sin; the marks of God's displeasure are upon it; 'tis the guilt

guilt within that troubles and galls more than the want without.

But it is not so here; and therefore you have no reason to be cast down under it.

Object. *But though there be no sting of guilt, yet this condition wants no other stings: As first, The discredit of Religion: I cannot comply with mine Engagements in the World, and thereby Religion is like to suffer.*

Sol. 'Tis well you have an heart to discharge every duty; yet if God disable you by Providence, 'tis no discredit to your Profession, because you do not that which you cannot do, so long as it is your desire, and endeavour to do what you can and ought to do: and in this case, God's Will is, that lenity and forbearance be exercised towards you, *Deut.* 24. 12, 13.

2. Object. *But it grieves me to behold the necessities of others whom I was wont to relieve and refresh, but now cannot.*

Sol. If you cannot, it ceases to be your duty; and God accepts the drawing out of your soul to the hungry in compassion, and desire to help them, though you cannot draw forth a full purse to relieve and supply them.

3. Object. *But I find such a condition full of temptation, a sore clog in the way to Heaven.*

Sol. Every condition in the World hath its clogs, and attending Temptations; and were you in a prosperous condition, you might

might there meet with more temptations, and fewer advantages than you now have: for though, I confess, poverty hath its temptations as well as prosperity, yet I am confident, prosperity hath not those excellent advantages that poverty hath: for here you have an opportunity to discover the sincerity of your love to God, when you can live upon him, find enough in him, and constantly follow him, even when all External inducements and motives fail. And thus I have shewed you how to keep your hearts from the temptations and dangers attending a poor and low condition in the World, when want pinches, and the heart begins to sink; then improve, and bless God for these helps to keep it.

6. Season. *The sixth Season of expressing this diligence in keeping the Heart, is the Season of duty; when we draw nigh to God in publick, private, or secret duties; then 'tis time to look to the heart; for the vanity of the heart seldom discovers it self more than at such times. How oft doth the poor Soul cry out, O Lord, how fain would I serve thee, but vain thoughts will not let me! I came to open my heart to thee, to delight my soul in Communion with thee; but my corruptions have set upon me. Lord, rate off those vain thoughts, and suffer them not to prostitute my soul, which is espoused to thee, before thy Face.* The sixth Case then is this. 6. Case.

6. Case. *How the heart may be kept from distractions by vain thoughts, in the time of duty.*

There is a twofold distraction, or wandring of the heart in duty: (1.) Voluntary and Habitual, *Psal.*78.8. *They set not their hearts aright, and the spirit was not stedfast with God.* This is the Case of Formalists; and it proceeds from the want of an holy Bent, and Inclination of the heart to God. Their hearts are under the power of their Lusts; and therefore, 'tis no wonder they go after their Lusts, even when they are about holy things, *Ezek.*33.3. (2.) Involuntary and lamented Distractions, *Rom.*7. 21, 24. *I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me: O wretched man that I am,* &c. This proceeds not from the want of a holy Bent and Aim, but from the weakness and imperfection of Grace. And in this case, the soul may make the like complaint against its own corruptions, that *Abijah* did against *Jeroboam*; 2 *Chron.*13.6, 7. *Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat is risen up against his Lord, when Rehoboam was young, and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them: And there are gathered unto him vain men, and children of Belial.* Grace hath a Dominion, but lusts are mutinous and seditious, during the infancy thereof. But it is not my business to shew you how these distractions come into the heart; but rather, how to get,

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and keep them out of the Heart: In order whereto, take these ten following Helps.

1. *Help.* Sequester your selves from all earthly employments, and set apart some time for solemn preparation, to meet God in duty. You cannot come reeking hot out of the World, into God's presence, but you will find a tang of it in your duties. It is with the heart, a few minutes since plunged in the World, now at the feet of God, just as with the Sea after a Storm, which still continues working, muddy, and disquiet, though the Wind be laid, and Storm be over: thy heart must have some time to settle. There are few Musicians that can take down a Lute or Viol, and play presently upon it, without some time to tune it. There are few Christians can presently; as, *Psal.* 57.7. *O God, my heart is fixed, it is fixed.* Oh, when thou goest to God in any duty, take thy heart aside, and say, O my Soul! I am now addressing my self to the greatest work that ever a Creature was employed about. I am going into the awful presence of God, about business of everlasting moment.

O my Soul! Leave trifling now, be composed, watchful, serious: this is no common work; 'tis God-work, Soul-work, Eternity-work. I am now going forth, bearing Seed, which will bring forth Fruit to Life or Death, in the World to come. Pause a while

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upon thy sins, wants, troubles; keep thy thoughts a while in these, before thou addressest thy self to duty. David *first mused, and then spake with his Tongue*, Psal. 39. 3, 4. So *Psal.* 45. 1. *My heart is indicting*, &c.

2. *Help.* Having composed thy heart by privious Meditation, presently set a Guard upon thy Senses. How often are poor Christians in danger of losing the eyes of their mind by those of their body; for this *Job* covenanted with his Senses, *Chap.* 31. 1. For this *David* prayed, *Psal.* 119. 37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.* This may serve that *Mystical Arabian Proverb*, which advises *To shut the Windows, that the House may be light.* It were excellent, if you could say in your Offices upon duty, as an holy One once did, when he came off from duty; *Claudimini oculi mei, claudimini*, &c. *Be shut, O my eyes, be shut; for it is impossible you should ever see such beauty and glory in any Creature, as I have now seen in God.* You had need avoid all occasions of distraction from without, for be sure, you will meet enough from within. Intention of spirit, in the work of God, locks up the eye and ear against Vanity. When *Marcellus* entred the Gates of *Syracuse*, *Archimedes* was so intent about his Mathematical Scheme, that he took no notice of the Souldiers, when they entred his very Study

with drawn Swords. A *fervent* cannot be *vagrant* heart.

3. *Help. Beg of God a mortified Fancy.* A working Fancy (saith one) how much soever it be extolled among Men, is a great snare to the Soul, except it work in Fellowship with right Reason, and a sanctified heart. The Fantasie is a power of the Soul, placed between the Senses, and the Understanding; 'tis that which first stirs it self in the Soul, and by its motions the other powers are stirred: 'tis the common Shop, where Thoughts are first forged and framed. And as this is, so are they: If Imaginations be not first cast down, 'tis impossible that every [illegible]t of the heart should be brought into obedience to Christ, 2 *Cor.* 10.5. This Fancy is naturally the wildest, and most untameable power in the Soul. Some Christians (especially such as are of hot and dry Constitutions) have much to do with it.

And truly, the more spiritual the heart is, the more 'tis troubled about the vanity and wildness of it. Oh, what a sad thing it is, that thy nobler Soul must lacky up and down after a vain, roving fancy; that such a Beggar should get on Horse back, and such a Prince run after it on foot; that it should call off the Soul from attendance upon God, when it is most sweetly engaged in Communion with him, to prosecute such vanities as

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it will ſtart at ſuch times before it. Beg earneſtly of God, that the power of Sanctification may once come upon it. Some Chriſtians have attained ſuch a degree of Sanctification of their Fancies, that they have have much ſweetneſs left upon their hearts by the ſpiritual working of it in the Night-ſeaſon. When thy Fancy is more mortified, thy Thoughts will be more orderly and fixed.

4. *Help.* If thou wouldſt keep thy heart from thoſe vain Excurſions, realize to thy ſelf by Faith the holy and awful preſence of God in duties.

If the preſence of a grave man will compoſe to us a ſeriouſneſs, how much more the preſence of an holy God? Thinkſt thou, thy Soul durſt be ſo gariſh and light, if the ſenſe of a Divine Eye were upon it? Remember, the place where thou art is the place of his Feet, *Iſa.* 60. 13. Act Faith upon the Omniſciency of God. *All the Churches ſhall know, that I am he that ſearcheth the heart and trieth the reins; and will give to every one of you according to your works*, Rev. 2. 23. *All things are naked and open to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.* Heb. 4. 12. Realize his infinite holineſs. Into what a ſerious compoſed frame did the ſight of God in his holineſs put the Spirit of the Prophet, *Iſa.* 6. 5. Labour to get alſo upon thy heart due Apprehenſions of the greatneſs of God, ſuch as

Abraham

Abraham had, *Gen.* 18. 27. *I that am but dust and ashes have taken upon me to speak to God.* And lastly, remember the Jealousie of God how tender he is over his Worship; *Lev.* 10. 3. *And Moses said unto Aaron, This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; and before all the people, I will be glorified.*

A man that is praying (saith *Bernard*) *should behave himself as if he were entering into the court of Heaven, where he sees the Lord upon his Throne, surrounded with ten thousand of his Angels and Saints ministring unto him.* When thou comest from a duty, in which the heart hath been toiling and wandering, thou may'st say, *Verily God was in this place, and I knew it not.* Suppose all the impertinencies and Vanities, which have past through the heart, in a duty, were written out, and interlin'd with petitions, could'st thou have the face to present it to God? Should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer; would not men abhor thee? Why, thy thoughts are vocal to God, *Psal* 139. 2. If thou wert petitioning the King for thy Life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy Band-strings, or catching at every Fly that lights upon thy Cloaths, whilst thou art speaking to him about such serious matters? Oh, think sadly upon that Scripture, *Psal.* 87. 7. *God*

is greatly to be feared in the Assemblies of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him! Why did God descend in Thundrings and Lightnings, and dark Clouds upon *Sinai*? *Ex.* 19.16,18. Why did the Mountains smoak under him, the people quake and tremble round about him; yea, *Moses* himself not exempted; but to to teach the people that great truth? *Heb.* 12.28,29. *Let us have Grace whereby we may serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming Fire.* Present God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be reduced to a more serious frame.

5. *Help.* Maintain a praying frame of heart in the intervals of duty. What is the reason our hearts are so dull, careless, and wandering when we come to hear or pray, but because there have been such long intermissions in our Communion with God; by reason whereof, the heart is out of a praying frame? if that spiritual warmth, those holy impressions we carry from God in one duty, were but preserved to kindle another duty, it would be of Mavellous advantage to keep the heart intent and serious with God.

To this purpose those intermediate Ejaculations, betwixt stated and solemn duties, are of most sweet and excellent use: By these, one duty is as it were, linked to another;

ther? and so the Soul as it were, wraps up it self in a Chain of duties. That Christian seldom misses his mark in solemn duty, that shoots up many of these Darts in the Interval of duty. 'Tis an excellent Commendation Christ bestows upon the Spouse, *Cant.* 4. 11. *Thy Lips O my Spouse, drop as the Honey-comb.* Upon which text, one gives this sweet Note, the Honey-comb drops actually but sometimes, but it always hangs full of sweet drops, ready to fall, if our Ejaculations were more; our Lamentations upon this account would be fewer.

6. Help. Endeavour to engage to raise thy Affections to God in duty, if thou wouldst have thy distractions cured.

A droping eye and a melting heart, are seldom troubled as others, upon this account. When the Soul is intent about any work, it gathers in its strength, and bends all the thoughts about it; and when it is deeply affected, it will be intent. The affections command the thoughts to go after them: Deadness causes distraction, and distraction increases deadness. Could you but look upon duties, as the Galleries of Communion, in which you walk with God; wher your Souls may be filled with those ravishing and matchless delights that are in his presence; your Soul would not offer to stir from thence.

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It is with the heart in duty, as it is with those that dig for Gold Oar, they try here, and finding none, try there, and so go from place to place, till at last they hit upon the rich Vein, and there they sit down. If thy heart could but hit upon the rich Vein in Duty, it would dwell and abide there with delight and constancy. *O how I love thy Law, it is my meditation day and night, Psal.* 119. 97. The Soul could dwell day and night upon his knees, when once Delights, Loves, and Desires are engaged. What's the reason your hearts are so shuffling, especially in secret duties? Why are you ready to be gone almost as soon as you are come into the presence of God? But because your affections are not engaged.

7. Help. *Mourn over the matter to God, and call in assistance from Heaven when vain thoughts assault the heart in Duty.*

When the Messenger of Satan buffeted *Paul* by wicked injections, as is supposed, he goes to God, and mourns over it before him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 18. Never slight wandring thoughts in duty as small matter: follow every vain thought with a deep sigh, Lord I came hither to speak with thee, and here a busie Devil and a vain Heart conspiring together, have set upon me. O my God, what a heart have I? Shall I never wait upon thee without Distraction! When shall I

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enjoy an hour of free Communion with thee? Help me, my *God*, this once; do but display thy Glory before mine eyes, and my Heart shall quickly be recovered. Thou knowest, I came hither to enjoy thee, and shall I go away without thee! See how the Heart of the poor Child works towards thee! strives to get near thee, but cannot. My heart is aground, *Come thou North-wind, blow South-wind.* O for a fresh Gale now from thy Spirit, to set my affections afloat! Couldst thou but thus affectionately bewail thy Distractions to God, thou mightest obtain Help and deliverance from them. He would say to Satan, and thine imperious Lusts, as *Ahasuerus* said of *Haman, What, will he force the Queen before my Face?* Who are these that set upon my Child in my Work and Presence.

8. Help. *Look upon the success and sweetness of thy Duties, as very much depending upon the keeping of thy Heart close with God in them.*

These two things, the Success and Sweetness of Duty, are as dear to a Christian, as his two Eyes; and both of these must necessarily be lost, if the Heart be lost in duty. *Job* 35. 13. *Surely God heareth not Vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it.* The Promise is to an Heart engaged, *Jer.* 29. 13. *Then shall you seek me, and find me, when*

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ye shall search for me with all your Hearts. Well then, when thou findeſt thy Heart under the power of Deadneſs and Diſtraction, ſay to thy Soul, O what do I loſe by a careleſs Heart now! My Praying-times are the choiceſt Parts, the Golden Spots of all my time: Could I but get up this Heart with God, I might now obtain ſuch Mercies, as would be matter for a Song to all eternity.

9. Help. *Look upon it as a great diſcovery of the Sincerity, or Hypocriſie of your Hearts, according as you find them careful, or careleſs in this Matter.*

Nothing will ſtartle an upright Heart, more than this: What ſhall I give way to a cuſtomary wandring of Heart from God? Shall the Spot of the Hypocrite appear upon my Soul? They indeed can drudge on in the round of Duty, never regarding the Frames of their Hearts, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32. but ſhall I do ſo? When Men come into the preſence Chamber, and the King is not there, they bow to the empty Chair. O never let me be ſatisfied with empty duties! Never let me take my leave of a Duty, *until mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts.*

10. Help. *Laſtly, it will be of ſpecial uſe to keep thy heart with God in duties, to conſider what influence all thy duties have unto thine eternity.*

These are your ſeed-times, and what you

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ſow in your duties in this world, you muſt look to reap the fruit of it in another World, *Gal.* 6. 7,8. if you ſow to the fleſh, of that you ſhall reap corruption; but if to the ſpirit, life everlaſting: O my Soul, anſwer ſeriouſly; wouldeſt thou be willing to reap the fruit of vanity, in the world to come? Dareſt thou ſay, when thy thoughts are roving to the ends of the earth in duty, when thou ſcarce mindeſt what thou ſayeſt or heareſt, now Lord, I am ſowing to the ſpirit, now I am providing and laying up for Eternity, now I am ſeeking for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, now I am ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, now I am taking the Kingdom of Heaven by an holy violence? O ſuch a conſideration as this ſhould make the multitudes of vain thoughts that preſs in upon thy heart in duty, to fly ſeven ways before it; and thus have I ſhewed you how to keep your hearts in the times of duty.

7. Seaſ. *The ſeventh ſeaſon calling for more than common diligence to keep the heart is, when we receive injuries and abuſes done to men, ſuch is the depravedneſs and corruption of man in this collapſed ſtate, that* homo homini lupus, *one man is become a Woolf; a Tyger to another: They are as the Prophet complains,* Hab. 1. 14. As the fiſhes of the Sea, and as the creeping things that have

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no Ruler over them, *and as wicked men are cruel and oppressive one to another, so they conspire together to abuse and wrong the people of God, as the same Prophet complains,* verse 13. the wicked devour the man that is more righteous than he. *Now when we are thus abused and wronged, 'tis hard to keep the heart from revengeful motions: to make it meekly and quietly to commit the cause to him that judgeth righteously, to exercise no other affection but pity towards them that abuse us. Surely the Spirit that is in us lusteth to revenge, but it must not be so: you have choice helps in the Gospel to keep down your hearts from such sinful motions against your enemies, and to sweeten your imbittered Spirit. The seventh case therefore shall be this.*

7. Case. *How a Christian may keep his heart from revengeful motions, under the greatest injuries and abuses from men.*

The Gospel indeed allows a liberty to vindicate our innocency, and assert our rights, but not to vent our corruptions and invade God's right, when therefore thou findest thy heart begin to be inflamed by revengeful motions, presently apply the following remedies; and the first is this.

1. Remedy. *Urge upon thy heart the severe prohibitions of revenge by the law of God.* Remember that is forbidden fruit, how pleasing and luscious soever it be to our vi-

ciated appetites; Oh saith nature, revenge is sweet; Oh but saith God, the effects thereof shall be bitter; how plainly hath God interdicted this flesh-pleasing sin, *Prov.* 29. 22. *Say not, I will recompence evil. Prov.* 24. 22. *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me. Rom.* 12. 17. *Recompence to no man evil for evil; and* v. 19. *Avenge not your selves, but rather give place to wrath:* Nay that's not all, but. *Prove* 25. 21. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.* The words *feed him*, as Criticks observe, signifies to feed chearfully and tenderly, as Birds do their young ones, the Scripture is a great friend to the peace and tranquility of humane societies, which can never be preserved, if revenge be not deposed. It was wont to be an argument urged by the Christians to prove their Religion to be supernatural and pure; that it forbids revenge, which is so sweet to Nature; and verily 'tis a thousand pities such an argument should be lost. Well then, awe your hearts with the authority of God in these Scriptures, and when carnal reason saith, my enemy deserves to be hated, let Conscience reply, but doth God deserve to be disobeyed? thus and thus hath he done, and so he hath wronged me, but what hath God done, that I should wrong him? if he dare be so bold as to break the peace, shall I

I be so wicked to break the precept: if he fears not to wrong me, shall not I fear to wrong God? Oh let the fear of Gods threatnings repress such sinful motions.

2. Remed. *Set before your eyes the most eminent patterns of meekness and forgiveness that your Souls may fall in love with it.*

This is the way to cut of those common pleas of the flesh for revenge: As thus, no man would bear such an affront, Yes, such and such have born as bad and worse. I shall be reckoned a coward, a fool; If I pass by this, no matter, as long as I follow the examples of the wisest, the holiest of Men: Never did any suffer more and greater abuses from men than Christ did, and never did any carry it more peaceably and forgivingly, *Isa.* 53. 7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter,* &c. This pattern the Lord sets before you for your imitation, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21, 22, 23. *For even hereunto you are called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* To be of a meek forgiving Spirit is Christ-like, God-like, *then shall you be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he maketh his*

Sun to rise upon the evil, and upon the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust, *Mat.* 5. 45. How eminently also did this Spirit of Christ rest upon his Apostles; never were there such men upon the Earth for true excellency of Spirit. None were abused more, or suffered their abuses better: *Being reviled (say they) we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it, being defamed, we intreat*, 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13. Mr. *Calvin*, though a man of a quick spirit, yet had attained such a degree of his Christ-like forgiveness, that when *Luther* had used some opprobrious language of him, the good man said no more but this; Although he should call me a Devil, yet I will acknowledg him to be an eminent Servant of Jesus Christ.

I have often heard it reported of Holy Mr. *Dod*, that when one (enraged at his close convincing Doctrine) pick't a quarrel with him, smote him on the face, and dashed out two of his teeth, this meek servant of Christ spat out the teeth and blood into his hand, and said, See here, you have knockt out two of my teeth, and that without any just provocation; but on condition I might do your Soul good, I would give you leave to dash out all the rest. Here is the excellency of a Christians Spirit, above all the attainments of Moral Heathens. Though they were excellent at many other things, yet they could never attain this forgiving Spirit: it is the

first office of Justice (saith *Tully*) to hurnt no body, unless first provoked by an Injury, whereupon *Lanctantius*, *O quam simplicem veramque sententiam duorum verborum adjectione corrupit*? What a dainty sentence spoiled the Orator by adding these two last words! strive then for this excellency of spirit, which is the proper excellency of Christians, do some singular things that others cannot do, and then you will have a testimony in their consciences when *Moses* outdid the *Magicians*, they were forced to confess the finger of God in that business.

3. Rem. *Consider well the quality of the person that wronged thee*; either he is a good man or a wicked man that hath done thee the injury: If he be a good man, there is a light and tenderness in his Conscience, and that will bring him at last to a sense of the evil he hath done; however Christ hath forgiven him greater injuries than these, and why would'st not thou? will not Christ upbraid him with any of those wrongs done to him, but frankly forgive them all, and wilt thou take him by the throat for some petty abuse he hath done unto thee?

Or is he a wicked man? if so, truly you had more need to exercise pity than revenge towards him, and that upon a double account: for 1. he is beside himself, so indeed is every unconverted sinner, *Luke* 15. 17.

would you go into *Bedlam* and there hear one rail at you, another mock at you, and a third threaten you, would you say I would be revenged upon them? no, you would rather go away pitying of them. Alas poor creatures they are out of their wits, & know not what they do. Besides, (2.) there is a day coming, if they repent not, when they will have more misery, than you can find in your hearts to wish them; you need not study revenge; Gods vengeance sleepeth not, and will shortly take place upon them, and is not that enough? have they not an eternity of misery a coming? If they repent not, this must be the portion of their Cup, and if ever they do repent, they will be ready to make you reparation.

4. Rem. *Keep down thy heart by this consideration, that by revenge thou canst but satisfie a Lust, but by forgiveness, thou shalt conquer a Lust.*

Suppose by revenge thou shouldst destroy one Enemy, I will shew thee how by forgiving thou shalt conquer three; thine own lusts, the Devils temptations, and thy Enemies heart: and is not this a more glorious Conqueſt? If by revenge thou overcome thine Enemy, (yet as *Bernard* said) *infelix victoria ubi superans virum succumbit vitio*: unhappy victory, when by overcoming another man, thou art overcome by thine own

Corruption

corruption; but this way you may obtain a glorious conquest indeed. What an honourable and dry victory did *David* this way obtain over *Saul*, 1 Sam. 24. 16, 17. *And it came to pass, when* David *made an end of speaking these words, that* Saul *lift up his voice and wept; and he said to* David, *thou art more righteous then I.*

It must be a very disingenuous nature indeed upon which meekness and forgiveness will not work, a stony heart which this fire will not melt; to this sence is that *Prov.* 25. 21. *If thine Enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of Fire upon his head.* Some will have it a Sin-punishing Fire, but others, an heart melting Fire; to be sure it will either melt his heart or aggravate his misery. *Augustin* thinks that *Steven*'s Prayer for his Enemies, was a great means of *Pauls* Conversion.

5. Rem. *Seriously propound this question to thy own heart, have I got any good by the wrong and injury received, or have I not*; if they have done you no good, turn the revenge upon your selves. O that I should have such a bad heart, that can get no good out of such trouble. O that my Spirit should be so unlike to Christs; the patience and meekness of other Christians have turned all the injuries thrown at them into precious stones; the spirits of others have been raised in bles-

sing God when they have been loaded with reproaches by the World, they have bound them as an Ornament to their necks. *Superbus fio* (said *Luther*) *quod video nomen pessimum mihi crescere.* I could even be proud upon it that I have a bad name among wicked men: to the same purpose *Jerome* sweetly, *Gratias ago Deo meo quod dignus sum quem mundus odorit*, I thank my God that I am worthy to be hated of the World: thus their hearts were provoked by injuries to magnifie God and bless him for them: if it work contrary with me, I have cause enough to be filled with self-displacency.

If you have got any good by them, if the reproaches and wrongs you have received, have made you search your hearts the more, watch your ways the more narrowly? if their wronging you have made you see how you have wronged *God*, then let me say for them, as *Paul* did for himself, pray forgive them this wrong.

What can you not find an heart to forgive one that hath been instrumental of so much good to you, that's strange! What though they meant it for evil, yet if God have turned it to good; you have no more reason to rage against the instrument, than he had who received a wound from his enemy which only brake and let out that imposthume, which otherwise had been his death.

6. Rem

6. Rem. *'Tis of excellent use to keep the heart from revenge, to look up and eye the first cause by all which our troubles are ordered.*

This will calm and meeken our Spirits quickly, never did a wicked tongue try the patience of a Saint, more than *David*'s was tried by that railing *Shimei*; yet the Spirit of this good Man was not at all poisoned with revenge, though he goes along cursing and casting stones at him all the way; yea, though *Abishai* offered *David*, if he pleased, the head of that enemy; but the King said, *What have I to do with you ye Sons of* Zerviah? *So let him curse because the Lord hath said unto him, curse* David; *Who shall then say wherefore hast thou done so?* It may be God uses him as his Rod to lash me, because I by my sin made his enemies to blaspheme him, and shall I be angry with the Rod? How irrational were that? This also was it that quieted *Job*, he doth not rail and vow revenge upon the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, but eyes *God* as the orderer of those troubles, and is quiet. *The Lord hath taken away, blessed be his Name*, Job 1. 12.

Object. But you will say, *To turn aside the right of a Man, to subvert a Man in his cause, the Lord approved not*, Lam. 3. 36.

Answ. True, but though it fall not under his approving, yet it doth under his permitting will, and there is a great argument

for quiet submission in that: nay, he hath not only the permitting, but the ordering of all those troubles: did we see more of an holy God, we should shew less of a corrupt nature in such trials.

7. Rem. *Consider how you daily wrong God, and you will not be so easily inflamed with revenge against others that have wronged you.*

You are daily grieving and wronging God, and yet he bears, forgives, and will not take vengeance upon you, and will you be so quick in avenging your selves upon others? O what a sharp and terrible rebuke is that, *Mat.* 18. 32, 33. *O thou wicked, and sloathful servant; I forgive thee all that Debt because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy Fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?* None shall be so filled with Bowels of Pity, forbearance, and Mercy to such as wrong them, as those should be as have experienced the Riches of Mercies themselves. Methinks the Mercy of God to us should melt our very Bowels into mercy over others; 'Tis impossible we can be cruel to others, except we forget how kind Christ hath been to us: Those that have found mercy, should shew mercy. If kindnesses cannot work, methinks fears should: *If ye forgive not men their Trespasses; neither will your Father forgive you your Trespasses*, Mat. 6. 15.

8. Rem.

8. Rem. *Lastly, Let the consideration of the Day of the Lord, which draweth nigh, withhold your Heart from anticipating it by acts of Revenge.*

Why are you so quick? Is not the Lord at hand, to avenge all his abused servants? *Be patient therefore my Brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord: behold the Husband-man waiteth,* &c. *Be also patient: for the Coming of the Lord draws nigh. Grudge not one against another, Brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold the Judge standeth at the Door,* Jam. 5. 7, 8, 9. This Text affords three Arguments against Revenge. (1.) The Lord's near approach. (2.) The example of the Husbandmans patience. (3.) The danger we draw upon our selves by auticipating *Gods* Judgment, Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and he will distribute justice more equally and impartially than you can: They that believe they have a God to right them, will not so much wrong themselves, as to avenge their own wrongs.

1. Obj. *But Flesh and Blood is not able to bear such abuses.*

Sol. If you resolve to consult Flesh and Blood in such cases, and do no more but what that will enable you to do; never pretend to Religion, Christians must do singular and supernatural things.

2. Object. *But if I pack up such abuses, I*

shall

shall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.

Sol. 1. You may be reckoned so among fools, but God and good Men will account it your wisdom, and the excellency of your Spirits.

2. It must be a base Spirit indeed, that will trample upon a meek and forgiving Christian. And thus learn to keep your Hearts from Revenge, under all provocations.

8. Season. *The next Season in which we are in danger of losing our hearts, is, when we meet with great Crosses and Provocations: Then sinful Passion is apt to transport the heart. 'Tis the Fault of many good Men, to be of hasty and quick Spirits, when provoked; though they dare not concoct Anger into Malice, for that would be a note of* Wickedness; *yet are they very incident to sudden Anger, which is a sign of* Weakness. Beza *in the life of* Calvin *observes, that he was of a keen and hasty Spirit: And he that writes the Life of great* Cameron, *saith, That his Anger was stirred towards his near and familiar Friends; but then he would easily oppose it, and acknowledg his Weakness. Alas! When Provocations and Tryals of our Patience come, we know not what Spirits we are of. The Eighth Case therefore is this:*

Beza in Vit. Calv. p. 109.

Icon Cameronis.

8. Case. *How the heart may be kept meek and*

and patient under great Crosses and Provocations?

There are three sorts of *Anger*, Natural, Holy, and Sinful Anger. (1.) Natural, which is nothing else but the Motion of the Irascible Appetite towards and offensive object; & this in it self is no sin; they are Propassions, rather than Passions; the Infelicites, rather than the Sins of Nature, as *Jerome* calls them. Reason (saith *Plutarch*) is the *Driver*, the Soul is the *Chariot*; and the two Horses that draw it on in all its Motions, are the *Concupiscible* and *Irascible Appetites*: whilst these are rightly managed by Reason, they are not only lawful, but very useful to the Soul. God would not have us to be stupid and insensate, though he would have us to be meek and patient. In *Ephes.* 4. 26. he allows the natural Motions, but forbids the sinful Exorbitancy. (2.) Holy Anger, which is a pure flame, kindled by a Heavenly spark of love to God, and in the Scripture is called *Zeal*; which is (as one saith) the Dagger which Love draws to God's Quarrel. Such was *Lot*'s against the *Sodomites*, and that of *Moses* against the *Idolatrous Israelites*. When *Servetus* condemned *Zwinglius* for his rashness, his answer was, *In aliis mansuetus ero, in blasphemiis in Christum, non ita*; In other Cases I will be mild, but in the Cause of *Christ* not so. That which the World calls

Moder-

shall be reckoned a fool, and every one will trample upon me.

Sol. 1. You may be reckoned so among fools, but God and good Men will account it your wisdom, and the excellency of your Spirits.

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Moderation

Moderation and *Mildneſs* here, is in *God's* accouut *Stupidity* and *Cowardlineſs*: Neither of theſe are that which I am now perſwading you to keep your Hearts againſt. But (3.) There is a ſinful Paſſion, that is the thing which endangers you. Now *Anger* becomes ſinful, when 'tis either *Cauſleſs*, Mat. 5. 22. *or exceſſive*, and that either in meaſure or time, exceeding the value of the Impulſive Cauſe, be it more tranſient or abiding; yet it is a ſin, and it is a matter of Humiliation before *God*. Now, the means to keep the Heart from it under Provocations, are theſe.

Means 1. *Get low and humble Thoughts of your ſelves, and then you will have meek Spirits, and peaceable Deportments towards others.*

The humble is ever the patient Man, Pride is the root of paſſion, a lofty will be a ſurly Spirit: Bladders blown up with the Wind, will not lie cloſe together; but prick them, and you may pack a thouſand in a ſmall room. *Only by Pride cometh Contention*, Prov. 13. 10. When we over-rate our ſelves, then we think we are unworthily treated by others; and that provokes. And here (by the way) take notice of one great Benefit of Acquaintance with our own Hearts, even the meekning and calming of our Spirits. Chriſtian, methinks thou ſhouldeſt know ſo much by thy ſelf, that 'tis impoſſible any ſhould lay thee lower, or have baſer

Thoughts

Thoughts of thee, than thou haſt of thy ſelf. Some render the Original of that Text, *Hab.* 2. 5. *Thus the proud Man is as he that tranſgreſſeth by Wine*; and Drunkards, you know, are quarrelſome. O get more Humility, and that will bring you more Peace!

Means 2. *Be often ſweetning your Spirits, in communion with God, and they will not eaſily be imbittered with Wrath towards Men.*

A quiet *Conſcience* never produced an unquiet *Converſation.* The peace of *God* doth βραβεύειν rule in the Heart, as an Umpire in appeaſing Strifes; for ſo much that word, *Col.* 3. 15. imports. Wrath and Strife are hugely oppoſite to the Frame and Temper of a Spiritual Heart, becauſe inconſiſtent with the Delight and Contentment of that Dove-like Spirit, which loves a ſedate and quiet Breaſt. O ſaith a Soul that feeds upon the ſweet Communion of the Spirit, ſhall the Sparkles of Provocations now catch in my Paſſions, and raiſe ſuch a ſmoak in my Soul, as will offend and drive away the Comforter away from me? This is ſo effectual a Remedy againſt Paſſion, that I durſt almoſt venture in a Chriſtian of an haſty Nature, to make Long-ſuffering a ſign of Communion with *God.* Seeſt thou ſuch a Chriſtian quiet and calm under Provocations; 'tis very like his Soul feeds upon ſuch ſweetneſs

ness in God, as he is loath to leave. And on the other side, seest thou a Christian turbulent and clamerous, doubtless all is not well within. His Spirit is like a Bone out of joynt, which cannot move without pain and trouble.

3. Mean. *Get due Apprehensions of the evil Nature and Effects of sinful Anger*, ira furor brevis. *Anger is short in Madness*, (saith one) *Ira animæ febris*, (saith another) *Anger is the Feavour of the Soul.* 'Tis *the* Inter regnum *and Eclipse of Reason*, saith a third.

The effects of it also are very sad (1.) *It grieves the Spirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30. Banishes him from the Breast in which it rages and tumultuates. God is the God of Peace; the Presence and Comforts of God are only enjoyed in a Calm. 'Tis a Golden note one gives upon a fore-cited Text. God doth not usually bless with peace of Conscience, such as make no Conscience of Peace. (2.) It gives Advantages to the Devil, *Eph.* 4. 26, 27. Satan is an angry and discontented Spirit, and finds no rest, but in restless hearts: He lives like the *Salamander*, in fires of Contention: He bestirs himself when the Spirits are in a commotion. Sometimes he fills the Heart with revengeful Thoughts: sometimes he fills the lips, and enflames the tongue with undecent Language; even a meek *Moses* sometimes speaks unadvisedly with his Lips. (3.)

(3.) It dis-tunes the Spirit for Duty. Upon this account the Apostle disswades Husbands and Wives from jarring Carriages and Contentions, that their Prayers be not hindred, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. all Acts of Worship must be suitable to the Object of Worship: But God is the God of peace, the God of Love. (4.) To mention no more; it disparages the Christian Reilgion. How would *Plato* and *Pythagoras* shame us if they were now living? Christ was a Lamb for Meekness? and doth it become his Followers to be like Lyons? O keep your Hearts, or you will at once lose not only your own Peace, but the Credit of Religion.

Means. 4. *Consider how sweet a thing it is to a Christian to Conquer his Corruptions, and carry away the Spoils of them.*

He that is slow to Anger, is better than the Mighty, and that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City, Prov. 6. 32. Is there any content in venting a Passion? How much more in mortifying it? When thou comest in a calm mood, or upon a Death-bed to review thy Life, how comfortable then will it be to reflect upon the Conquests thou hast got by the fear of *God*, over the evil propensions of thine own Heart, 'Twas a memorable saying of *Valentinian* the Emperour, when he came to die, *Among all my Conquests* (said he) *there is but one that now com-*

forts

forts me. And being asked what that was? He answered, *I have overcome my worst Enemy, mine own naughty Heart.*

Means 5. *Shame your selves by setting before you those eminent Patterns, that have been most excellent for Meekness.*

Above all, compare your Spirits with the Spirit of Christ. *Learn of me* (saith He) *for I am meek and lowly*, Matth. 11. 29. Christ was meek and lowly, but I am proud and passionate. It was the high Commendation of *Moses*, Numb. 12. 3. *Now the Man* Moses *was meek above all the Men of the Earth; and this was the Man that knew God face to face.* 'Tis said of *Calvin* and *Ursin*, that they both were of Cholerick Natures; but yet had so learned the meekness of Christ, as not to utter one word under the greatest Provocation unbeseemiug Religion. When I read the pretty stories of the very Heathens, that never had the advantages we had, how the *Pythagorians*, whatever Feuds had been among them in the day, would hush all, by sending to each other this Message, *The Sun is almost set*; and that of *Plato* to his Scholar, *I would beat thee, if I were not angry.*

When I read what lenity and tenderness *Lycurgus* shewed to an insolent Fellow, that had struck out one of his Eyes, I am ashamed to see how much Christians are outshot by Heathens, who by meer Moral Argument

ment and precepts, had thus meekned their Spirits, and conquered their Paſſions. The dim Light of Nature could teach *Seneca* to ſay, That Anger will hurt a man more than the Offence, for there is a certain Bound in the Offence; but I know not how far mine Anger will carry me. 'Tis a ſhame that theſe Men who came ſo far behind us in means and Advantages, ſhould ſo far out-ſtrip us in Meekneſs and Patience.

Mean. 6. Laſtly, *Avoid all irritating Occaſions.*

He that will not hear the Clapper, muſt not pull the Rope. *Grievous Words ſtir up Anger*, (ſaith *Solomon*) *Prov.* 15. 1. Do not only pray, and reſolve againſt it, but get as far as you can out of the way of it: 'tis true Spiritual valour to run as far and as faſt as we can out of Sin's way. If you can but avoid Anger in its firſt riſe, there is no great fear of it aftarwtrds; for it is not with this ſin, as it is with other Sins? other Sins grow to their full ſtrength by degrees, their firſt motions are the weakeſt? but this ſin is born in its full ſtrength; it is ſtrongeſt at firſt; withſtand it then, and it falls before you. Thus learn to keep your Hearts when Provocations ariſe.

9. *Seaſon.* The ninth Seaſon of exerting our greateſt Diligence, *Is the Critical hour of Temptation, wherein Satan lays Cloſe Siege*

to

to the Fort-Royal of a Christians Heart, and often surprizes it for want of Watchfulness. To keep the Heart now, is no less a Mercy than a Duty; few Christians are so well skilled in detecting the fallacies, and retorting the Argument by which Satan uses to draw them to sin, as to come off safe in those Encounters. Watch and pray (*saith our Lord*) lest ye enter into temptation, *Mark* 14. 38. *Even an eminent* David *and a wise* Solomon, *have smarted for their carelessness in such a time as this. The ninth Case therefore shall be this.*

9. Case. *How a Christian, when strongly solicited by the Devil to Sin, may keep his heart from yielding to Temptation?*

Now there are six special Arguments, by which Satan subtilly insinuates and winds in the Temptation, in all which I shall offer thee some help for the keeping of thy Heart, and the first is this.

Arg. 1. The first Argument is drawn from the pleasure of sin; O (saith Satan) here is pleasure to be enjoyed? temptation comes with a smiling Countenance and charming voice: What, art thou so flegmatick and dull a Soul as not to feel the powerful Charms of Pleasure? Who can withhold himself from such Delights?

Now thine heart may be kept from the danger of this temptation, by retorting this Argument of Pleasure upon the tempter:

which

which is done two ways.

1. Thou tellest me, Satan, that sin is pleasant; be it so: But are the gripes of Conscience, and the flames of Hell so too? Is it pleasant to feel the wounds and throbs of Conscience? If so, Why did *Peter* weep so bitterly, *Mat.* 26. 75. Why did *David* cry out of broken bones, *Psal.* 51. I hear what thou sayest of the pleasure of sin, and I have read what *David* hath said of the terrible effects of sin in his *Psalm*, to bring to remembrance, *Psa.* 38. v. 2. *Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.* Ver. 3. *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine Anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin.* Ver. 4. *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burthen; they are too heavy for me.* Ver. 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.* Ver. 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.* Ver. 7. *My loyns are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh.* Ver. 8. *I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*

Here I see the true face of sin, if I yield to thy temptation, I must either feel these pangs of Conscience, or the flames of Hell.

2. What talkest thou of the pleasure of sin, when by experience I know there is more

more true pleasure in the mortification, than can be in the commission of sin. O how sweet is it to please God, to obey Conscience, to preserve inward peace, to be able to say, in this trial I have discovered the sincerity of my heart, now I know I fear the Lord, now I see that I truly hate sin. Hath sin any such delight as this? This will choak the temptations.

Arg. 2. The second Argument is drawn from the secresie of sin. O (saith Satan) this sin will never disgrace thee abroad; none shall know it.

This Argument may be retorted, and the heart secured thus: Thou sayest, none shall know it; but Satan, canst thou find a place void of the Divine Presence for me to sin in? Thus *Job* secured his heart from this temptation, *Job* 31. 4. *Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps?* Therefore he makes a covenant with his eyes, *v.* 1. After the same manner *Salomon* teacheth us to retort that temptation, *Prov.* 5. 20, 21. *And why, my Son, wilt thou be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.* What if I hide it from the eyes of all the World for the present, I cannot hide it from God; and the time is at hand, when all the World shall know it too; for the

World

World assures me, *Luke.* 8. 17. *That what is done now in secret, shall be proclaimed as upon the house top.* Besides, is not my Conscience as a thousand witnesses? Do I owe no reverence to my self: Could the Heathen man say, *Turpe quid ausurus, te sine teste time*, when thou art tempted to commit sin, fear thy self without any other witness; and shall not I be afraid to sin, before mine own Conscience, which always hath a reproof in its mouth, or a pen in its hand, to record my most secret actions?

Arg. 3. The third Argument by which Satan tempteth to sin, is taken from the gain and profit arising out of it. Why so nice and scrupulous? 'tis but stretch Conscience a little, and thou mayest make thy self: Now is my opportunity.

The heart may be kept from falling into this dangerous snare, by retorting the temptation thus: But what profit will it be if a man should gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul! *Mat.* 16. 26. Oh my Soul, my precious Soul! shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in this world? There is an Immortal Spirit dwelling in this fleshly tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, which must live to all Eternity, when this World shall lye in white ashes. A Soul, for which Jesus Christ shed his

his precious and invaluable Blood? I was sent into this World to provide for this Soul; indeed, God hath also committed to me the care of my body, but (as one happily expresses it) with this difference: A Master commits two things to a Servant, the Child and the Child's Cloaths; will the Master thank that Servant, if he plead, I have kept the Cloaths, but I have neglected the life of the Child?

Gospel-Glass. pag. 3.

Arg. 4. The fourth Argument is drawn from the smalness of the sin, 'Tis but a little one, a small matter, a trifle, who should stand upon such niceties?

This Argument may be retorted three ways.

1. But is the Majesty of Heaven, a little one too? If I commit this sin, I must offend and wrong a great God, *Is.*40.15,16,17,22.

2. Is there any little Hell to torment little sinners in: Are not the least Sinners there filled with the fulness of wrath? O there is great wrath treasured up for such as the World count little sinners.

3. The less the sin, the less the inducement to commit it. What shall I break with God for a trifle? Destroy my peace, wound my conscience, grieve my spirit, and all this for nothing? O what madness is this.

Arg. 5. A fifth Argument is drawn from the

the grace of God, and hopes of pardon: Come, God will pass by this as an infirmity, he will not be extreme to mark it.

But stay my heart.

1. Where do I find a promise of mercy to presumptuous sinners; Indeed, for involuntary surprisals, unavoidable, and lamented infirmities, there is a pardon of course; but where is the promise to a daring sinner, that sins upon a presumption of pardon? Pause, a while, my Son, upon that Scripture, *Numb.* 15. 27. 30. *And if a Soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a Sin-offering*, &c. *But the Soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that Soul shall be cut off from among his people.*

2. If God be a God of so much mercy, how can I abuse so good a God? Shall I take so glorious an Attribute as the mercy of God is, and abuse it unto sin? Shall I wrong him because he is good? Or should not rather the goodness of God lead me to repentance, *Rom.* 2. 4. *There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared, Psal.* 130. 4.

Arg. 6. Lastly, Sometimes Satan incourages to sin from the examples of good and holy men, thus and thus have they sinned, and being restored; therefore this may consist with grace, and thou be saved nevertheless. The danger of this tempration is

avoided, and the heart secured, by retorting the Argument these three ways.

1. Though good men may commit the same sin materially, which I am tempted to; yet did ever any good man venture to sin upon such a ground and encouragement as this?

2. Did God record these examples for my immitation, or for my warning? Are they set up as Sea-marks, that I might avoid the Rocks upon which they split? 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Now these were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after the evil things as they also lusted.*

3. Am I willing to feel what they felt for sin? O I dare not follow them in the ways of sin: *quia me vestigia terrent*: Lest God plunges me into the depths of horror, into which he cast them.

Thus learn to keep your hearts in the hour of temptation from sin.

10. *Seas.* The tenth special Season, *to keep the heart with all diligence, in the times of spiritual darkness and doubting, when it is with the Soul, as it was with* Paul *in his dargerous voyage, neither Sun, nor Moon, nor Star appears for many days: When by reason of the hidings of Gods Face, the prevalency of Corruption, and the inevidence of Grace; the Soul is even ready to give up all its hopes and comforts for lost; to draw sad and desperate*

conclusions

concluſions upon it ſelf; to call its former comforts, vain deluſions; its Grace Hypocriſie, When the ſerene and clear Heavens are overcaſt with dark Clouds, yea filled with Thunders and horrible tempeſt; when the poor penſive Soul ſits down and weeps forth this ſad Lamentation, My hope is periſhed from the Lord! *Now to keep the Heart from ſinking in ſuch a day as this, to enable it to maintain its own ſincerity, is a matter of great difficulty. The tenth Caſe then is this.*

Caſe 10. *How the people of God in dark and doubting Seaſons, may keep their Hearts from entertaining ſuch ſad concluſions about their Eſtates, as deſtroy their Peace, and unfit them for their Duty.*

There are two general heads to which the grounds of doubting our ſincerity may be reduced, (1) Gods carriage towards the Soul, either in time of ſome *extraordinary affliction*, or ſome long and *ſad deſertion*. Or, (2) The ſouls carriage towards God: And here it uſually argues againſt the truth of its one graces, either, (1) From its relapſes into the ſame ſins, from which it hath formerly riſen with ſhame and ſorrow. Or, (2) From the ſenſible declinings of its affections from God. Or, (3.) From exceſs of the affections towards Creature comforts and enjoyments. Or, (4) From its enlargements in publick, and often ſtraitning

in private duties. Or, (5) for some horrid injections of Satan, with which the Soul is greatly perplexed. Or lastly from Gods silence and seeming denial of its long depending Suits and Prayers.

These are the common grounds of those sad conclusions: now in order to the establishment and support of the heart in this condition it will be necessary,

1. That you be acquainted with some general Truths, which have a tendency to the settlement of a trembling and doubting soul.

2. That you may be rightly instructed about the forementioned particulars: which are the grounds of your doubtings.

The general truths requisite for poor doubting Souls to be acquainted with, are these.

1. That every working and appearance of hypocrisie doth not presently prove the person in whom it is to be an hypocrite. You must carefully distinguish between the presence and predominancy of hypocrisie: there are remains of deceitfulness in the best hearts; *David* and *Peter* had sad experience of it, yet the standing frame and general bent of the heart being upright: did not denominate them hypocrites.

2. That we ought as well to bear what can be said for us, as against us: It is the sin of upright hearts sometimes to use

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an over-rigid and mercileſs ſeverity againſt themſelves: they do not indifferently conſider the caſe of their own ſouls: it is in this caſe as *Solomon* ſpeaks in another, *Prov.* 13. 7. *There is that maketh himſelf rich, and yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himſelf poor, and yet hath great Riches.* 'Tis the damning ſin of the ſelf-flattering hypocrite, to make his condition better than it is: And it is the ſin and folly of ſome upright ones to make their condition worſe than indeed it is. Why ſhould you be ſuch enemies to your own peace? to read over the evidences of Gods love to your Souls, as a man doth a Book which he intends to confute? why do you ſtudy to find out evaſions to turn off theſe comforts which are due to you? 'tis ſaid of *Joſeph* that he was minded to put away his eſpouſed *Mary*, not knowing that that holy thing which was conceived in her, was by the Holy Ghoſt: And this may be your caſe. A third truth is this.

3. *That many a Saint hath charged and condemned himſelf of that, which God will never charge him with, nor condemn him for.* Why haſt thou hardened our hearts from thy fear (ſaith the Church) *Iſa.* 63. 17. and yet the verſe before manifeſts, that their hearts were not ſo hardened: Godly *Bradford* wrote himſelf a hypocrite, a painted Sepulchre; yet doubtleſs God acquitted him of that charge.

Every thing which is a ground of strife to the people of God, is not a sufficient ground of questioning their sincerity. There are many more things to trouble you than there are to stumble you: If upon every slip and failing through infirmity you should question all that ever was wrought upon you, your life must be made up of doubtings and fears: you can never attain a setled peace, nor live that Life of praise and thankfulness, the Gospel calls for.

5. *The Soul is not at all times fit to pass judgment upon its own condition:* To be sure in the dark day of desertion, when the Soul is benighted; and in the stormy day of Temptation, when the Soul is in a hurry; 'tis utterly unfit to judge its estate: examine your hearts upon your Beds, and be still, *Psal.* 4. This is rather a season for watching and resisting, than for judging and determining.

6. *That every breach of Peace with God, is not a breach of Covenant with God:* The wife hath many weaknesses, and failings, often grieves and displeases her Husband; yet in the main is faithful and truly loves him: These failings may cause him to alter his carriage, but not to withdraw his love, or deny his relation. *Return O back-sliding Israel, for I am Married unto you.*

7. Lastly

7. Lastly, *Whatever our sin or trouble be, it should rather drive us to God, than from God.* Pardon my sin, for it is great, *Psal.* 25. 11. Suppose it be true, that thou hast so and so sinned, that thou art thus long and sadly deserted; yet 'tis a false inference, that therefore thou shouldest be discouraged, as if there were no help for thee in thy God. When you have well digested these seven establishing truths, if still the doubt remain then consider what may be replied to the particular grounds of these doubts. As,

1. You doubt and are ready to conclude the Lord hath no regard or love for your Souls, because of some extraordinary affliction which is to come upon you: But I would not have thy Soul so to conclude, till you be able satisfactorily to answer these three Questions.

1. *Quest.* If great troubles and afflictions be marks of Gods hatred, why should not impunity and unconstant prosperity be tokens of his love? for *contrariorum contiaria est ratio & consequentia*, of contrary things, there is a contrary reason and consequence: But is this so indeed? or saith not the Scripture quite otherwise? *Prov.* 1. 32. *The prosperity of fools destroy them.* So *Psal* 73. 5.

2. *Quest.* Dare I draw the same conclusion upon all others that have been as much, yea more afflicted than my self? If this ar-

gument conclude against thee, then so it doth against every one in thy condition; yea the greater the affliction of any Child of God hath been, the more strongly the argument still concludes? and then wo to *David*, *Job*, *Haman*, *Paul*, and all as have been afflicted as they were.

3. *Quest.* Had God exempted you only from those troubles, which all other his people feel, would not that have been a greater ground of doubting to you than this? especially since the Scripture saith, *Heb.* 12. 8. *If you be without chastnings, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not Sons.*

O how is our Father put to it by froward Children! if he afflicts, then one cries he loves me not; if he exempt from affliction, others question his love upon that ground. Surely you have other work to do under the rod than this.

2. Or do you rashly infer the Lord hath no love for you, because he hides his face from you, that your condition is miserable, because dark and uncomfortable, before you draw such rash conclusions, see what answer you can give to these four following queries.

1. *Quer.* If any action of God towards his people will bear a favourable, as well as an harsh and severe construction, why should not his people interpret it in the best sense? And is not this such? may he not have a de-

sign

ſign of love as well as of hatred in this diſpenſation? may he not depart for a ſeaſon and not for ever, yea that he might not depart for ever? you are not the firſt that have miſtaken Gods ends in deſertion, *Iſa.* 49 14. Sion *ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God hath forgotten me*; was it ſo indeed, nothing leſs, *verſe* 15. Can a Mother forget, *&c.*

2 *Quer.* Do you find the marks of an abſolute total and final deſertion upon your own ſpirits, that you are ſo apt to conclude yours to be ſuch? do you find your hearts inclined to forſake God? have you loſt your conſcientious tenderneſs in point of ſin? If ſo, ſad characters appear unto you indeed: But if in this dark hour you are as tender of ſin as ever; as much reſolved to cleave to God as ever; I cannot, I will not forſake God, let him do what he will with me. Oh no, I cannot. If your hearts work thus, it can be but a partial limited and temporary deſertion; by this he ſtill keeps his intereſt in your hearts, a ſure ſign he will return and viſit you again.

3. *Q.* Iſſence and feeling a competent judge of Gods actions and deſigns; or may a man ſafely rely upon its teſtimony after ſo many diſcoveries of his infalibility of it? Is this a ſound argument? if God had any love for my ſoul, if it were not quite gone, I ſhould feel it now as well as in former times? but I

cannot feel it, therefore it is quite gone. Do you not know the Sun still keeps on his course in the Heavens, even in dull and close weather, when you cannot see it? and may it not be so with the love of God, Read *Isa.* 50. 10. may I not as well conclude in Winter when the Flowers have hid their beautiful heads under ground, they are quite dead and gone because I cannot find them in *December*, where I saw them in *May*.

4. *Quer.* Think you the Lord cares not to break his Childrens hearts, and his own promise too? hath he no more regard to either? If he return no more, these must be the consequences, *Isa.* 57. 16, 17. *Heb.* 13 5.

Well then, from Gods carriage towards you, either in affliction or desertion, no such discouraging heart-sinking conclusions can be inferr'd. Next, let us see whether they may not be inferr'd from our carriage towards God: and here the principal grounds of doubting are such as these.

1. I am fallen again into the same sin from which I am formerly risen with repentance and resolution, therefore my sinning is customary sinning, a spot that is not the spot of Gods Children: hence the upright soul trembles, upon this 'tis ready to affirm that all its former humiliations for, and oppositions unto sin, were but acts of hypocrisie. But stay poor trembling heart:

1. *Quer.*

1. *Quer.* If this be so, how comes it to pass that Christ put such a favourable construction upon the Disciples sleeping the third time, when he had as often reproved them for it? *Mat.* 26. 40, 41. And how is it that we find in Scripture so many promises made not only to the first Sins, but also to the backslidings of Gods people, *Jer.* 3. 22. *Hos.* 14 4.

2. *Q.* Is not your repentance and care renewed as often as your guilt is renewed? Yea the oftner you sin, the more you are troubled: it is not so in customary sinning, the rise whereof *Bernard* excellently discovers. (1) saith he, *Lib. de Consc. p.* 1109. When a man accustomed to good, sinneth grievously, it seems importable, yea he seems to descend alive into Hell. (2) In process of time it seems not importable, but heavy; and betwixt importable and heavy, there is no small descent. (3) Next it becomes light, his conscience smites but faintly, and he feels not the stripes of it. (4) Then there is not only a total insensibleness of it, but that which was bitter and displeasing, is now become sweet and pleasing in some degree. (5) Then it is turned into custom, and not only please, but daily pleases. Lastly, custom is turned into nature, he cannot be pulled away from it, but defends and pleads for it. This is customary sinning,

this is the way of the wicked; but the quite contrary is our condition.

Quer. 3. Are you sure from Scripture grounds, that a good man may not relapse again and again into the same sin? 'Tis true, as for gross sins, they do not use to relapse into them. *David* committed Adultery no more, *Paul* persecuted the Church no more, *Peter* denied Christ no more; but I speak of ordinary infirmities: *Jobs* Friends were good men, yet (saith he) *Chap.* 19. 3. *These ten times have you reproached me.* So then, no such conclusions follows from this first ground of doubting.

2. The second ground is, the declining and withering of our affections to spiritual things. O saith the upright Soul, if ever I had been planted a right seed, I should have been as a green Olive tree in the house of my God: But my branches wither, therefore my root is naught. But stay,

Quer. May you not be mistaken about the decay of grace, & fading of your affections? What if they be not so quick and ravishing as at first, may not that be recompenced in the spirituality & solidity of them now? 1 *Phil.* 9. *I pray God your love may abound more and more in all Judgment*; it may be more solid, though not so fervorous; or do you not mistake by looking forward to what you would be, rather than backward

to

to what once you were? 'tis a good note of *Ames*; we discern the growth of grace, as the growth of plants, which we perceive rather, *crevisse quam crescere*, to have strown than to grow.

Quer. 2. But grant it be so indeed as you affirm, must it needs follow that the root of this matter is not in you? *David*'s last ways are distinguished from his first, 2 *Chron.* 17 3. and yet both first and last, a holy man. The Church of *Ephesus* is charged by Christ for leaving her first love, and yet a golden Candlestick: Many precious Saints in that Church, *Rev.* 2. 2, 3, 4.

3. A third ground of these sad conclusions is, the excess of our affections to some creature enjoyments. I fear I love the creature more than God, and if so, my love is but hypocritical. I sometimes feel stronger and more sensible motions of my heart to some earthly comforts, than I do to heavenly objects; therefore my Soul is not upright in me. But stay Soul.

1. *Quer. May not a man love God more solidly and strongly, than the Creature, and yet his affections to the Creature be sometimes moved more violently and sensibly than towards God?* As rooted malice argues a stronger hatred, than a sudden, though more violent passion; so we must measure our love, not by a violent motion of it, now and then, but

by

by the depth of the root, and the constancy of its actings: Because *David* was so passionately moved for *Absolom*, *Joab* concludes, that if he had lived, and all the people died, *it would have pleased him well*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 7. but that was argued more like a *Soldier* than a *Logician*.

(2. Quer.) *If you indeed love the Creature for itself, if you make it your end, and religion but a means, then the conclusion is rightly drawn upon you.* But if you love the Creature in reference to God, and see nothing in it seperated from him, tho' sometimes your affection offends in the excess, this is consistent with sincere love to God. To love the Creature inordinately (*i. e.*) to put it into Gods room, & make it mans end; this is the love of a carnal heart to love it immoderately, that is, to let out more affection to it, than we ought, is sometimes the sin of the best hearts.

(3. Quer.) *Have not many Souls feared as you do, that when Christ and Creature should stand as competitors in some eminent tryal, they should forsake Christ rather than the Creature, and yet when brought to that Dilemma, have been able to cast all the world at their heels for Christ?* Many of the *Martyrs* had such fears, and thus they were satisfied; the pravalency of love is best seen at parting: There may be more love to Christ in thy soul than

than thou art now aware of: and if God bring thee to such a pinch, thou mayst see it.

4. A fourth ground of the said conclusion is from hence, that we find our hearts somtimes, more straitned in private than in publick duties. Oh if my Soul were sincere, its acting in duty would be uniform. I fear I am but a *Pharisee* upon this ground, 'tis said indeed we should at any time find our hearts straitned in private. But,

1. *Quer.* Do not all thine enlargements in duty whether publick or private, depend upon the Spirit, who is the Lord of influences, and according as he gives out, or holds back these influences, so art thou enlarged or straitned? And what if somtimes he please to give that in publick which he withholds in private duty, as long as thy Soul is satisfied in neither without Communion with God, and the straitness of thy Heart is indeed its burden: Doth that argue thee to be an hypocrite?

(2. *Quer.*) Dost thou not make Conscience of private duties, and set thy self as before the Lord in them, indeed, if thou live in the constant neglect or careless performance of them, if thou art curious about publick, and careless about private duties, that would be a sad sign; but when you have conscienciously performed, and often met with God in them, it will not follow,

you

you are insincere because that communion is somtimes interrupted. Besides,

(3. *Quer.*) May there not be something at somtimes in publick, which is wanting in a private duty, to raise and advantage thine affections. God may somtimes make use of the melting affections of them with whom thou hear'st or pray'st as pretty instruments to move thy affections, this advantage is wanting in private; therefore from hence (the case so standing) no such inferrence can be drawn.

5. Another ground is from those horrid injections of Satan, with which the Soul is greatly perplexed; by these I may see what a heart I have: Can Grace be where these are?

Yes, grace may be where such thoughts are, though not where they are lodged and consented to: Dost thou cry out under the burden, enter thy protest in Heaven against them? strive to keep up holy and reverend thoughts of God? Then 'tis a *rape*, not a voluntary *prostitution*.

6. The last ground of these sad conclusions, is the Lords long silence and seeming denial of our long depending Suits and prayers. Oh, if God had any regard to my Soul, he would have heard my crys before now! but I have no answer from him, therefore

no

no interest in him. But stay, doubting Soul.

1. *Quer.* Have not many Saints stumbled upon this stone before thee? *Psal.* 31. 22. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes, nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplication.* So the Church, *Lam.* 3. 44. Thou covereſt thy self with a Cloud, that our prayers should not Pass through, *Jonah* 2. 4. Then said I, I am cast out of thy sight, and may not you be mistaken in this matter as well as they.

2. *Quer.* Though Gods abhoring and final rejecting prayer be an Argument of his abhorring the person that prays, yet dare we conclude so from a meer suspension of the answer? *God may bear long with his own elect, that cry unto him day and night,* Luk. 18. 7.

3. *Quer.* Can you deny but that there are some signs of appearing in your soul, even while God suspends his answer, that argues your prayers are not rejected by him? As, (1) Though no answer come, yet you are resolved to wait; you dare not say as that prophane wretch did, 2 *Kings* 6. 33. *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait for him any longer.* (2) You can clear and justifie God still, and lay the reason because of his silence upon your selves. So did *David*, *Psal.* 22. 2, 3. *O my God, I cry in the day-time, and thou hearest not; and in the night, and am*

not

not silent; but thou art holy, &c. (3.) The suspension of Gods answer makes you inquisitive into your own hearts, what evils are there that obstructs your prayers; so the Church, *Lam.* 3. 8. *He shutteth out my prayer*; and how doth this work, you may see *Ver.* 40. *Let us search and try our ways.* Well then, neither from hence may you conclude that God hath no love for your souls.

And thus have I shewn you how to keep your hearts in the dark and doubting season from those desperate conclusions of unbelief. God forbid any false heart should incourage it self from these things, 'tis our unhappiness, that when we give Saints and Sinners their proper portions that each of them are so prone to take up the others part.

Caution.

11. Seal. *The eleventh special Season calling for this diligence to keep our hearts is, when suffering for Religion comes to an height, then look to your hearts, Matth.* 24. 8, 9, 10. "All these are the beginning of sorrows, "and they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be "hated of all Nations for my Name-sake; "and THEN shall many be offended. *When sufferings for Religion grow hot, then blessed is he that is not offended in Christ, troubles are then at an height.* 1. *When a mans nearest friends*

and

and Relations forsake and leave him, Mic. 7. 5, 6. 2 Tim. 4. 16. *When a man is engaged alone.* 2. *When it comes resisting to blood*, Heb. 12. 4. 3. *When temptations are presented to us in our suffering*, Heb. 11. 37. 4. *When eminent persons of profession turn aside, and desert the Cause of Christ*, 1 Tim. 2. 19. 5. *When God hides his face in a suffering hour*, Jer. 17. 17. 6. *When Satan falls upon us with strong temptations to question the grounds of our sufferings or the Souls interest in Christ, now 'tis hard to keep the heart from turning back, and the steps from declining Gods ways. The eleventh question then shall be this.*

11. Case, *How the heart may be kept from relapsing under the greatest sufferings for Religion?* If the bitterness of sufferings at any time cause thy Soul to distaste the way of God, and take up thoughts of forsaking it, stay thine heart under the temptation by propounding these eight questions solemnly to it.

1. Quest. *What reproach and dishonour shall I pour upon Christ and Religion, by deserting him at such a time as this?* This will proclaim to all the world, that how much soever I have boasted of the promises, yet when it comes to the tryal, I dare hazard nothing upon the credit of them; and how will this open the mouths of Christs enemies

mies to Blaſpheme? O better had I never been born, than that worthy name ſhould be Blaſphemed through me! ſhall I furniſh the triumphs of the uncircumciſed? ſhall I make mirth in Hell? O, if I did but value the name of Chriſt, as much as many a wicked man values his own name! I would never endure to ſee it expoſed to ſuch contempt. Will proud duſt and aſhes venture death, yea Hell, rather than a blot upon their name? And ſhall I venture nothing to ſave the Honour and Reputation of Chriſt.

2. Queſt. *Dare I violate my Conſcience to ſave my fleſh? who ſhall comfort me when Conſcience wounds me?* What comfort is there in Life, Liberty, or Friends, when peace is taken away from the inner man? When *Conſtantius* threatned to cut off *Samoſatinus* his right hand, if he would not ſubſcribe ſomwhat that was againſt his Conſcience, he held up both his hands to the Meſſenger that was ſent, ſaying, He ſhall cut of both rather than I will do it. Farewell all peace, Joy and Comfort, from that day forward? had *Zimri* peace who ſlew his Maſter? ſaid *Jezebel.* So ſay I here, had *Judas* peace? Had *Spira* peace? and ſhall I you have peace, if you tread in their ſteps? O conſider what you do!

3. Queſt. *Is not the publick intereſt of Chriſt and Religion, infinitely more than any private intereſt of my own?* 'Tis a famous paſſage that of *Terentius*, Captain to *Adrian* the Emperour, He preſented a Petition to *Adrian*, that the Chriſtians might have a Temple by themſelves to worſhip God apart from the *Arians*; the Emperour tore his Petition and threw it away, bidding him ask ſomthing for himſelf, and it ſhould be granted: But he modeſtly gathered up the pieces of his Petition again, and told him, *If he could not be heard in Gods Cauſe, he would never ask any thing for himſelf.* Yea; even *Tully* though an Heathen, could ſay, *Ne imortalitatem quidem contra rem publicam:* He would not except even of Immortality it ſelf againſt the Common-Wealth. Oh, if we had more publick, we ſhould not have ſuch cowardly Spirits.

4. Queſt. *Did Jeſus Chriſt ſerve me ſo, when for my ſake he expoſes himſelf to far greater ſufferings than can be before me*; His ſufferings were great indeed, he ſuffered from all hands in all his Offices, in every member, not only in his Body, but in his Soul; Yea, the ſufferings of his Soul, were the very ſoul of his ſufferings; witneſs the Bloody ſweat in the Garden, witneſs the Heart-melting and Heaven-rending outcry upon the Croſs, *My God, My God, why haſt*

hast thou forsaken me? And yet he flinched not, *He endured the Cross, despising the shame.* Alas! what are my sufferings compared with Christs? He drank up all that Vinager and Gall that would make my sufferings bitter. When one of the Martyrs was asked why he was so merry at his death? Oh said he! It is because the Soul of Christ was so heavy at his death. Did Christ bear such a burthen for me with unbroken patience and Constancy? And shall I shrink back for momentary and slight Afflictions for him?

5. Quest. *Is not eternal life worth the suffering of a moments pain?* If I suffer with him, I shall reign with him. O how will men venture life and limbs for a fading Crown, swim through Seas of Blood to a Throne? And I will venture nothing? Suffer nothing for the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away? My dog will follow my Horses heels from morning to night take many a weary step through mire and dirt, rather than leave me, though at night all he gets by it, is but bones and blows. If my Soul had any true greatness and sparks of generosity in it, how would it despise the sufferings of the way, for the glory of the end! How would it break down all difficulties before it, whilst by an eye of Faith, it sees the fore-runner, who is already entred

standing

standing, as it were, upon the Walls of Heaven, with the Crown in his hand, saying, He that overcometh, shall inherit all things. Come on then, my Soul, come on, there is eternal life laid up for them that by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, *Romans* 2. 7.

6. Quest. *Can I so easily cast off the Society and company of Saints, and give the right hand of fellowship to the wicked*; How can I part with such lovely Companions as these have been? How often I have been benefited by their counsel? *Ezra* 10. 3. How often refreshed, warmed, and quickned by their company? *Eccles.* 4. 10. 11. How often have I fasted and prayed with them? What sweet counsel have I taken with them, and gone to the House of God in company? And shall I now shake hands with them, and say farewel, all ye Saints for ever, I shall never be among you more? Come drunkards, swearers, blasphemers, persecutors, you shall be my everlasting companions? O rather let my body and soul be rent asunder, than that ever I should say thus to the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.

7. Quest. *Have I seriously considered the terrible Scripture Comminations against backsliders?* O my heart! darest thou turn back upon

upon the very points of such threatnings as these? *Jer.* 5. 6. *Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord, for he shall be like the Heathen in the Desart, and shall not see when good cometh*; i. e. *the curse of God shall wither him root and branch.* And Heb. 14. 26, 27. *If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledg of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries:* And again, verse 38. *If any man draw back, my Soul shall shall have no pleasure in him.* As if he should say, *Take him World, take him Devil for thine own, I have no delight in him.* Oh who dare draw back, when God hath hedged up the way with such terrible threats as these!

8 Quest. *Can I look Christ in the face at the day of Judgment, if I desert him now?*

He that is ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, Mark 8. 38. Yet a little while, and you shall see the sign of the Son of man coming in the Clouds of Heaven with Power and great Glory; the last Trump shall sound, the dead both small and great,

even all that sleep in the dust shall awake, and come before that great white Throne, on which Christ shall sit in that day. And now do but imagine thou saweſt the trembling knees, and quivering lips of guilty sinners; imagine thou heard'ſt the dreadful sentence of the Judge upon them, *Go ye cursed*, &c. and then a cry, the weeping, wailing, and wringing of hands, that there shall be. Would'ſt thou desert Christ now to protract a poor miserable life on earth? If the word of God be true, if the sayings of Christ be sealed and faithful, this shall be the portion of the Apostate: 'Tis an easie thing to stop the mouth of Conscience now, but will it be easie to stop the mouth of the Judge then? Thus keep thy heart, that *it depart not from the living God.*

12. *Seas.* The twelfth Seaſon of looking diligently to our hearts, and keeping them with greateſt care, is the time of sickneſs. *When a Child of God draws nigh to Eternity; when there are but a few sands more in the upper part of his Glass to run down, now Satan busily bestirs himself; of him it may be said, as of the natural Serpent,* Nunquam niſi moriens producitur in longum; *he is never seen at his full length till dying, and now his great design, since he cannot win the Soul from God, is to discourage and make it unwilling to go to God; though*

the gracious Soul with Jacob, *should then rouse up itself upon a dying-bed, and rejoice that the marriage-day of the Lamb is now almost come, though it should then say with dying* Austin, Vevere renuo ut Christo viam, *I despise life to be with Christ; or as dying* Millius, *when one asked him whether he were willing to die? Oh said he,* Illius est nolle mori qui nollit, ire ad Christum, *Let him be unwilling to die, who is unwilling to go to Christ. But Oh! what shrinking from death? what lothness to depart, may sometimes (indeed too frequently) be observed in the people of God? How loth are some of them to take death by the cold hand? If such a liberty were indulged to us, not to be dissolved till we dissolve our selves; when should we say with St.* Paul, I desire to be dissolved? *Well then, the last case shall be this.*

Case 12. *How the people of God in times of sickness, may get their hearts loose from all earthly engagements, and perswade them into a willingness to die.*

And there are seven Arguments which I shall urge upon the people of God at such a time as this, to make them chearfully entertain the Messengers of Death, and die as well as live like Saints, and the first is this.

1. Arg. *First the harmlesness of death to the people of God.* Though it keeps its dart, it hath lost its sting: A Saint (to allude to

that

that *Isa*, 11. 8.) *May play upon the hole of the Asp, and put his hand into the Cockatrices Den.* Death is the Cockatrice or Asp; the Grave is the hole or Den. A Saint need not fear to put his hand boldly into it; it hath left and lost its sting in the sides of Christ, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. *O Death! where is thy sting,* Why art thou afraid O Saint! that this sickness may be thy death, as long as thou knowest that the death of Christ is the Death of Death, indeed if thou didst die in thy Sins, as *Job* 8. 1. If death as a King did reign over thee, *Rom.* 5. .14 If it could feed upon thee as the Lyon doth upon the prey he hath taken, as *Psal.* 49. 14. *If Hell followed the pale Horse, as it is, Reve.* 6. 8. then thou mightest well startle and shrink back from it? but when God hath put away thy sins from the, *As far as the East is from the West, Psal.* 103. 12. As long as there is no other evil left in death, for thee to encounter with but bodily pain: as long as the Scriptures represent it to thee under such harmless and easie notions as the putting off thy Cloaths, 2 *Cor.* 5. 2. *And lying down to sleep upon thy bed, Isa.* 57. 2. Why shouldst thou be afraid? There is much difference betwixt death to the people of God and others, as betwixt the *Unicorns* Horn, when it is put upon the head of that fierce Beast, and when it is in the

Apothecaries shop, where it is made salubrious and medicinal.

Arg. 2. *Thy heart may be kept from shrinking back at such a time as this, by considering the necessity of death, in order to the full fruition of God.*

Whether thou art willing to die or no, I assure thee there is no other way to obtain the full satisfaction of thy Soul, and compleat its happiness, till the hand of death do thee the kind office to draw aside the Curtain of the flesh, thy Soul cannot see God: This Animal life stands betwixt him and thee, 2 *Cor.* 5, 6. *Whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord.* Thy Body must be refined and cast into a new mould, else that new wine of Heavenly glory would break it. *Paul* in his highest rapture, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. When he heard things unutterable, was then as a stander by, a looker on, not admitted into the company, as one of them; but as the Angels are in our Assemblies, so was *Paul* in that glorious Assembly, above, and no otherwise; and yet even for this, he must as it were, be taken out of the body, uncloathed for a little time to have a glimpse of that glory, and then put on his cloaths again. O then! who would not be willing to die for a full sight and enjoyment of God? Methinks thy Soul shoud look and sigh like a

Prisoner

prisoner through the Gates of this Mortality; *O that I had wings like a Dove, then would I fly away and be at rest.* Most men need patience to die, but a Saint that understands what death admits him to, should rather need patience to live: Methinks he should often look out and listen on a death-bed for his Lords coming; and when he receives the news of his approaching change should say, *The voice of my beloved, behold he cometh leaping over the Mountains, skiping over the Hills*, Cant. 2. 8.

Arg. 3. *Another Argument perswading to this willingness, is the immediate succession of a more excellent and glorious life.*

'Tis but a wink and you shall see God; your happiness shall not be deferred till the Resurrection; but as soon as the Body is dead, the gracious soul is swallowed up in life, *Rom.* 8. 10, 11. When once you have loosed from this shore in a few moments. your souls will be wafted over upon the wings of Angels to the other shore of a glorious Eternity, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* Did the Soul and Body die together, as *Berillus* taught? or did they sleep till the Resurrection, as others have groundlesly fancied? It had been a madness for *Paul* to desire a dissolution for the enjoyment of Christ. For if this were so, he enjoyed more of Christ,

whilst his Soul dwelt in its fleshly Tabernacle, then he should out of it.

There are but two ways of the Souls living known in Scripture, *viz.* The life of *Faith* and the life of *Vision*, 1. *Cor.* 5. 5. Those two divide all time, both present and future, betwixt them. 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. If when faith falls, sight should not immediately succeed. what should become of the undodied soul? but blessed be God, this great heart-establishing truth is evidently revealed in Scripture, *Luke* 23. 43. You have Christs promise, *John* 14. 3. *I will come and receive you to my self.* O what a change will a few moments make upon your condition! Rouze up dying Saint, when thy Soul is come out a little further, when it shall stand like *Abraham* in his Tent door, the Angels of God shall soon be with it: The souls of the elect are as it were put out to the Angels to nurse, and when they die, these Angels carry them home again to their Fathers house: if an Angel were caused to fly swiftly to bring a Saint the Answer of his Prayer, *Dan.* 9. 21. How much more will the Angels come post from Heaven, to receive and transform the praying Soul it self.

4. Arg. Father, *It may much conduce to thy willingness to die, to consider; that by death God oftentimes hides his people out of the way*

of

of all temptations and troubles upon earth, Rev. 14. 13. *Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.* 'Tis God's usual way, when some extraordinary calamities are coming upon the World, to set people out of harms way before hand, *Isa.* 67. 1. *Merciful men are taken away from the evil to come.* So *Mich.* 7. 1, 2. When such an evil time comes as is there described, *That they all lye in wait for blood, and every man hunts his Brother with a net.* Before that God by an act of favour houses his people before-hand, dost thou know what evil may be in the earth, which thou art so loth to leave? thy *God* removes thee for thy great advantage, thou art disbanded by death, and called off the field; other poor Saints must stand to it, and endure a great fight of afflictions.

'Tis observed that *Methusela* died the very year before the Floud; *Augustine* a little before the sacking of *Hippo*; *Pareus* just before the taking of *Heidelberge*; *Luther* observes that all the Apostles died before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and *Luther* himsel before the Wars broke out in *Germany*: It may be the Lord sees the tender heart cannot endure to see the misery, or bear the temptations that are coming, and therefore will now gather thee to thy grave in peace, and yet wilt thou cry, O spare me a little longer?

5. *Arg. If yet thy heart hang back, consider the great advantage you will have by death, above all that ever you enjoyed on earth.* And that (1) as to your communion with God. (2) As to your communion with Saints.

1. For your communion with God, the time of perfecting that is now come; thy soul shall shortly stand before the face of God, and have the immediate emanations and beamings forth of his glory upon it; here thy soul is remote from God, the beams of his glory strike it but obliquely & feebly, but shortly it will be under the Line; and there the Sun shall stand still as it did in *Gibeon*, there shall be no cloudings nor declinings of it. O how should this wrap thy soul with desires of being uncloathed.

2. As for the enjoyments of Saints, here indeed we have fellowship with them of the lower form; but that fellowship is so disswetned by remaining corruptions, that there is no satisfaction in it; as it the greatest plague that can befall an hypocrite to live in a pure Church, so 'tis the greatest vexation to the spirit of a Saint to live in a corrupt and disordered Church; but when death had admitted you into that glorious assembly of the Spirits of just men made perfect, you shall have the desire of your earts; here you cannot fully close one with another

another, yea you cannot fully close with your own soul. O what discords, jarrings, censurings, are here, what perfect blessed harmony there? in heaven each Saint loves another as himself, they are altogether lovely. O my Soul hast thee away from the Lions Dens, from the Mountains of *Bether*; from divided Saints, to the Mountains of Myrrhe, and Hill of Frankincense; thou art now going to thine own People, as the Apostles phrase imports, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8.

6. *Arg.* If all this will not do, *Consider what heavy burdens death will ease thy shoulders of.*

In this Tabernacle we groan, being burdened. (1.) with bodily distempers, how true do we find that of *Theophrastus*, the soul pays a dear rent for the Tenement it now lives in; but glorified Bodies are cloged with no dispositions, death is the best *Physician*, it will cure thee of all diseases at once. (2) With the in-dwellings of Sin, this makes us groan from the very bowels, *Rom.* 7. 44. *But he that is dead is free from sin*, *Rom.* 6. 7. Hath justification destroyed its *damning power*? and sanctification its *Reigning power*? so glorification destroys its very being and existence. (3) We groan under temptations here, but as soon as we are out of the body, we are out of the reach of temptation: when once thou art got into

Heaven, thou mayeſt ſay, now *Satan* I am there where thou canſt not come; for as the damned in Hell are *malo obformati*; ſo fixed in ſin and miſery, that their condition cannot be altered, ſo glorified Saints are *bono conformati*, ſo fixed in holineſs and glory, that they cannot be ſhaken. (4.) Here we grown under various troubles and affli ctons, but then the days of our mourning are ended. God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes: O then! let us haſt away, that we may be at reſt.

7. *Arg.* If ſtill thou linger like *Lot* in *Sodom*, then laſtly, *Examine all the pleas and pretences for a longer time on Earth.* Why art thou unwilling to die.

1. *Object.* O I have many Relations in the World, I know not what will become of them when I am gone.

Sol 1. If thou art troubled about their bodies and outward condition, why ſhould not that word ſatisfie thee, *Jer.* 20. 11. *Leave thy Fatherleſs Children to me, I will keep them alive; and let thy widdows truſt in me.* *Luther* in his laſt Will and Teſtament hath this expreſſion: *Lord thou haſt given me Wife and Children, I have nothing to leave them, but I commit them unto thee. O Father of the Futherleſs, and judge of the Widdow* nutri, ſerva, doce; *nouriſh, keep, and teach them*: Or art thou troubled for their Souls?

Thou

Thou canst not convert them if thou shouldest live, and God can make thy prayers and counsels to live, and take place upon them when thou art dead.

2. *Object.* I would fain live to do God more service in the World.

Sol. Well, but if he have no more service for thee to do here, why shouldest thou not say with *David*; If he have no delight to use me any farther, here am I, let him do what seemeth him good: In this world thou hast no more to do, but he is calling thee to an higher service and imployment in Heaven; and what thou wouldest do for him here, he can do that by other hands.

3. *Object.* I am not yet fully ready, I am not as a Bride compleatly adorned for the Bridegroom.

Sol. 1. Thy Justification is compleat already, though thy Sanctification be not so; and the way to make it so, is to die; for till then, it will have its defects and wants.

4. *Obj.* O but I want assurance, if I had that, I could presently!

Sol. 1. Yea, there it sticks indeed; but then consider, that an hearty willingness to leave all the world to be freed from sin, and be with God, is the next way to that desired assurance; no carnal person was ever willing to die upon this ground.

And

And thus I have finished those cases which so nearly concern the people of God, in the several conditions of their life, and taught them how to keep their hearts in all. I shall next apply the whole.

I. *Use of Information.*

YOU have heard that the keeping of the heart is the great work of a Christian, in which the very Soul and Life of Religion consists, and without which all other duties are of no value with God: hence then I shall infer to the consternation of hypocrites, and formal Professors.

1. *That the pains and labours which many persons have taken in Religion, is but lost labour, and pains to no purpose, such as will never turn to account.*

Many great services have been performed, many glorious works are wrought by men, which yet are utterly rejected by God, and shall never stand on record in order to an eternal acception, because they took no heed to keep their hearts with God in those duties: This is that fatal Rock upon which thousands of vain Professors split themselves eternally, they are curious about the externals of Religion, but regardless of their hearts. O how many hours have some *Professors* spent in hearing, praying, reading, conferring?

conferring? and as yet to the main end of Religion, as good they had ſate ſtill and done nothing, for all this ſignifies nothing; the great work, I mean heart-work, being all the while neglected: tell me, thou vain Profeſſor, when didſt thou ſhed a tear for the deadneſs, hardneſs, unbelief, or earthlineſs of thy heart? Thinkeſt thou, ſuch an eaſie Religion can ſave thee? If ſo, we may invert Chriſts words, and ſay, wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to life, and many there be that go in thereat: hear me thou ſelf-deluding hypocrite, thou that haſt put off God with heartleſs duties; thou that haſt acted in Religion as if thou hadſt been bleſſing an Idol, that could not ſearch and diſcover thine heart: thou that haſt offered to God but the skin of the ſacrifice, not the marrow, fat, and inwards of it? How wilt thou abide the coming of the Lord? How wilt thou hold up thy head before him, when he ſhall ſay, O thou diſſembling falſe-hearted man, how couldeſt thou profeſs Religion? with what face couldeſt thou ſo often tell me, thou loveſt me, when thou kneweſt all the while in thine own Conſcience, that thine heart was not with me? O tremble to think, what a fearful Judgment it is, to be given over to be a heedleſs and careleſs heart: and then to have religious duties inſtead of a rattle to quiet and ſtill the Conſcience!

2. Hence

2. Hence I also infer for the *humiliation* even of upright hearts, *that unless the people of God spend more time and pains about their hearts than generally or ordinarily they do, they are never like to do God much service, or be owners of much comfort in this World.*

I may say of that Christian that is remiss and careless in keeping his heart, as *Jacob* said of *Reuben*, *Thou shalt not excel*; it grieves me to see how many Christians there are that go up and down dejected and complaining, that live at a poor low rate, both of service and comfort; and how can they expect it should be otherwise as long as they live at such a careless rate? O how little of their time is spent in the closet, in searching, humbling and quickning their hearts?

You say your hearts are dead; and do you wonder they are so as long as you keep them not with the fountain of life? If your bodies have been pierced as your souls have been, they would have been dead too; never expect better hearts till you take more pains with them; *qui fugit molam, fugit farinam*; that will not have the *sweet*, must not expect the *sweet* of Religion.

O Christians! I fear your heat & strength hath run in the wrong Channel? I fear most of us may take up the Churches complaints, *Cant.* 1, 6. *They have made me the*

Keeper

Keeper of Vineyard,, but mine own Vineyards have I not kept. Two things have eaten up the time and ſtrength of the profeſſors of this Generation, and ſadly diverted them from heart-work. (1) Fruitleſs Controverſies ſtarted by Satan, I doubt not to this very purpoſe, to take us off from practical godlineſs to make us puzzle our heads, when we ſhould be ſearching our hearts. O how little have we minded that of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 9. *'Tis a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, and not with meats,* (*i. e.*) with diſputes and controverſies about meats, *which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

O kow much better is it to ſee men live exactly, than to hear them diſpute Subtilly; theſe unfruitful queſtions, how have they rendred the Churches? waſted time and ſpirits, and called Chriſtians off from their main buſineſs, from looking to their own Vineyard? what think you ſirs? had it not been better if the queſtions ventiled among the people of God of late days, had been ſuch as theſe? how ſhall a man diſcern the ſpecial from the common operations of the ſpirit? how may a ſoul diſcern its firſt declinings from God? how may a backſliding Chriſtian recover his firſt love? how may the heart be preſerved from unſeaſonable thoughts in duty? how may a boſom-

ſin

sin be discovered and mortified, &c. would not this have tended more to the credit of Religion, and comfort of your souls? O 'tis time to repent, and be ashamed of this folly! when I read what *Suarez* a Papist said, who wrote many Tombs of disputations, that he prized the time he set apart for the searching and examining of his heart in reference to God, above all the time that he ever spent in other studies, I am ashamed to find the professors of this age yet insensible of their folly, shall the conscience of a *Suarez* feel a relenting pang for strength and time so ill employed? and shall not yours? this is it your Ministers long since warned you of, your spiritual Nurses were afraid of the Rickets, when they saw your heads odly to grow, and your hearts to wither. O when will God beat our Swords into Plowshares! I mean our disputes and contentions, into practical godliness. (2.) Another cause of neglecting our heart hath been earthly encumbrances: the heads and hearts of many hath been filled with such a croud and noise of worldly business, that they have sadly and sensibly declined and withered in their zeal, love and delight in God, in their heavenly serious, and profitable way of conversing with man.

O how hath this wilderness entangled us! our discourses and conferences, nay our very

ry prayers and duties have a tang of it; we have had so much work without doors, that we have been able to do but little within. It was the sad complaint of an holy one, O said he! 'tis sad to think how many precious opportunities I have lost? how many sweet motions and admonitions of the Spirit I have posted over unfruitfully, and made the Lord to speak in vain, in the secret elapses of his Spirit? the Lord hath called upon me, but my worldly thoughts did still lodge in me, and there was no place within my heart for such calls of God! surely there is a way of enjoying God, even in our worldly imployments; God would never have put us upon them to our loss. *Enoch* walked with God, and begat Sons and Daughters, *Gen.* 5. 19. He walked with God, but did not retire and separate himself from the things of this life: And the Angels that are employed by Christ in the things of this World (for the *spirit* of the *living creatures* is in the wheels) they are finite creatures, and cannot be in a twofold *ubi* at one time, yet they lose nothing of the beatifical vision, all the time of their administration, for *Mat.* 18. 10. *their Angels* (even while they were employed for them) *Behold the face of their Father which is in Heaven.* We need not lose our visions by our employments, if the fault were Mr. *Strong*.

were not our own: Alas! that ever Christians who stand at the door of eternity, & have more work upon their hands than this poor moment of interposing time is sufficient for, should yet be filling both your heads and hearts with trifles.

3. Hence also I infer for the *awakening* of all, *That if the keeping of the heart be the great work of a Christian, then there are but few real Christians in the World.*

Indeed, if every one that hath learned the dialect of Christianity, and can talk like a Saint, if every one that hath gifts & parts, and by the common assisting presence of the Spirit can preach, pray or discourse like a Christian; in a word, if such as associate themselves with the people of God, and delight in Ordinances, may pass for Christians, the number then is great.

But alas! to what small number will they shrink, if you judge them by this rule! how few are there that make Conscience of keeping their *hearts*, watching their *thoughts*, judging their *ends*, &c. O there be but few closet-men among Professors! 'tis far easier for men to be reconciled to any duties in Religion than to these: the prophane part of the world will not so much as touch with the outside of Religious Duties, much less to this; and for the Hypocrite, though he be polite and curious about those externals,

yet

yet you can never perſwade him to this inward work, this difficult work: this work to which there is no inducement by humane applauſe, this work that would quickly diſcover what the hypocrite cares not to know? ſo that by general conſent this heart-work is left to the hands of a few ſecret ones, and I tremble to think how few hands it is.

II. *Uſe for Exhortation.*

IF the keeping of the Heart be ſo important a buſineſs, if ſuch choice advantages accrue to you thereby, if ſo many dear and precious Intereſts be wrapt up into it. then let me call upon the people of God everywhere to fall cloſe to this work.

O ſtudy your hearts, watch your hearts, keep your hearts: a way with fruitleſs controverſies and idle queſtions, away with empty names and vain ſhews, away with unprofitable diſcourſe, and bold Cenſures of others, turn in upon your ſelves, get into your cloſets, and now reſolve to dwell there; you have been ſtrangers to this work too long, you have kept others Vineyard, too long, you have trifled about the borders of Religion too long, this world hath detained you from your great work too long, will you now reſolve to look better to your Hearts? will you haſt and come out

of the crowds of busines and clamours of the world? and retire your selves more than you have done? O that this day you would resolve upon it!

Reader, methinks I should prevail with thee; all that I beg for, is but this, that thou wouldst step aside a little oftener to talk with God and thy own heart, that thou wouldest not suffer every trifle to divert thee; that thou wouldest keep a more true and faithful account of thy thoughts and affections; that thou wouldest but seriously demand of thy own heart, at least every evening, O my heart where hast thou been to day? whither hast thou made a road to day? if all that hath been said by way of inducement be not enough, I have yet more motives to offer you; and the first is this.

1. Motive, *The studying, observing, and diligent keeping of your own hearts will marvellously help your understanding in the deep mysteries of Religion.*

An honest well experienced heart is a singular help to a weak head, such a heart will serve you instead of a *Commentary* upon a great part of the Scriptures; by this means you shall far better understand the things of God than the Learned *Rabbies* and profound *Doctors* (if graceless and unexperienced) ever did, you shall not only have a more clear, but more sweet perception and

gust

guſt of them; a man may diſcourſe orthodoxly and profoundly of the nature and effects of Faith, the troubles and comforts of Conſcience, the ſweetneſs of Communion with God, that never felt the effecacy and ſweet impreſſions of theſe things upon his own ſpirit: but O how dark and dry are theſe notions, compared with his, upon whoſe heart they have been acted! when ſuch a man reads *Davids* Pſalms, or *Paul's* Epiſtles, there he finds his own objections made and anſwered: O ſaith he, theſe holy men ſpeak my very heart! their doubts were mine, their troubles mine, and their experiences mine. I remember *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaking to his people of *Antioch* about ſome choice experiences uſed this expreſſion, *Sciunt initiati quid dico*: thoſe that are initiated know what I ſay; experience is the beſt School-maſter. O then! ſtudy your hearts, keep your hearts.

Mot. 2. *The ſtudy and obſervation of your own hearts will antidote you againſt the dangerous and infecting errours of the times and places you live in.*

For what think you is the reaſon that ſo many profeſſors in *England* have departed from the faith, giving heed to fables? that ſo many thouſands have been led away by the error of the wicked; that Jeſuits and Quakers, who have ſworn corrupt doctrine, have

have had such plentiful Harvests among us? but because they have met with a company of empty professors that never knew what belongs to practical Godliness and the study of their of their own hearts.

If professors did but give diligence to study, search and watch thair own hearts, they would have that ἴδιον στήριγμον that stedfastness of their own that *Peter* speaks of, 2 *Pet.* 3. 17. and this would ballast and settle them, *Heb.* 13. 9. Suppose a Subtil Papist should talk to such of the dignity, and mirit of good works, could he ever work the perswasion of it into that heart that is conscious to it self of so much darkness, deadness, distraction, and unbeleif attending its best duties? 'Tis a good Rule, *Non est disputandum de gestu*, there is no disputing against taste; what a man hath felt and tasted, one cannot beat him off from that by argument.

3. Mot. *Your care and diligence in keeping your Hearts, will prove one of the best evidences of your sincerity.*

I know no external act of Religion that differences the sound from the unsound professor: 'tis wonderful to consider how far hypocrites go in all external duties, how plausible they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the observation of the World.

But

But then, they take no heed to their hearts, they are not in secret what they appear to be in publick; and before this trial no hypocrite can stand; 'tis confest they may in a fit, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry out of the wickedness of their hearts; but alas! there is no heed to be taken to these extorted complaints; in our Law, no credit is to be given to the testimony of one upon the rack, because it may be supposed, that the extremity of the torture may make him say any thing to be eased; but if self-jealousie, care and watchfulness, be the daily workings and frame of thy heart, it strongly argues the sincerity of it; for what but the sence of a divine eye, what but the real hatred of sin as sin, could put thee upon those secret duties which lye out of the observation of all creatures.

If then it be a desirable thing in thine eyes, to have a fair testimony of thine ingrity, and to know of a truth that thou feareſt God; then study thine heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

Mot. 4. *How fruitful, sweet and comfortable would all ordinances and duties be to us, if our hearts were better kept?*

O what precious communion might you have with God every time you approach him; if your hearts were but in frame, you might then say with *David*, *Psal.* 104. 34.

My

My meditation of him shall be sweet. That which loses all our comforts in Ordinances and more secret duties, is the indisposedness of the heart; A Christian whose heart is in a good *frame*, gets the start of others that come with him in that duty; they are tugging hard to get up their hearts with God, now trying this argument upon them, and then that, to quicken and effect them, and sometimes go away as bad as they came. Sometimes the duty is almost ended before their hearts begin to stir to feel any warmth quickning, or power from it; but all this while the prepared heart is at its work; this is he that ordinarily gets the first sight of Christ in a Sermon: the first Seal from Christ in a Sacrament: the first kiss from Christ in secret prayer. I tell you, and I tell you but what I have felt, that Prayers and Sermons would appear to you other manner of things than they do, did you but bring better ordered hearts unto them, you would not go away dejected and drooping. O this hath been a lost day, a lost duty to me; if you had not lost your hearts, it might not be so: if then the comfort of Ordinances be sweet, look to your herts, keep your hearts.

Mot. 5. *Acquaintance with your own hearts would be a fountain of matter to you in Prayer.*

A man that is diligent in Heart-work, and knows the estate of his own Soul; will have a Fountain-fulness of matter to supply him richly in all his addresses to God; his tongue shall not faulter, and make pauses for want of matter, *Psal.* 45. 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter*; or as *Montanus* renders the original, My heart is boyling up good matter, like a living Spring that is still bubling up fresh water; and then my tongue is as the pen of a ready writer; others must pump their memories, rack their inventions, and are often at a loss when they have done all: but if thou have kept and faithfully studied thine own heart, 'twill be with thee (as *Job* speaks in another case) like Bottles full of new Wine, that want vent, which are ready to burst; as holy matter flows plentifully, so more feelingly and sweetly from such a heart; when a heart-experienced Christian is mourning before God for some special heart-corruption, wrestling with God for the supply of some special inward want; he speaks not as other men do that have learned to pray by rote, their Confessions and Petitions are squeezed out, his drop freely, like pure Honey from the Comb, 'tis a happiness then to be with or near such a Christian. I remember *Bernard* having given Rules to prepare the heart for Prayer, concluded them thus, *Et*

cum talis fueris memento mei; and (saith he) when thy heart is in this frame, then remember me.

6. Mot. *By this the decayed power of Religion will be recovered again among professors, which is the most desirable sight in this World.*

O that I might live to see that day! when Professors shall not walk in a vain shew, when they shall please themselves no more with a name to live, being spiritually dead; when they shall be no more (as many of them are now) a company of frothy, vain and usurious persons, but the Majestick beams of holiness shining from their heavenly and serious conversation, shall awe the World, and command Reverence from all that are about them; when they shall warm the hearts of those that come nigh them, so that men shall say, God is in these men of a truth.

Well such a time may again be expected, according to that promise, *Isa.* 60. 12. *The people shall be righteous.* But till we fall closer to this great work of keeping our hearts, I am out of hopes to see those blessed days; I cannot expect better times till God give better hearts; Doth it not grieve you, to see what a scorn Religion is made in the World, what objects of contempt and scorn the Professors of it are made in the World? Proffessors,

Professors, would you recover your credit; would you again obtain an honourable testimony in the conscience of your very enemies, then keep your hearts, watch your hearts? 'tis the loseness, frothiness, and earthliness of your hearts that hath made your lives so, and this hath brought you under contempt of the World, you first lose your sights of God and communion with him, then your heavenly and serious deportment among men; and by that your interest in their Consciences: O then! for the credit of Religion, for the honour of your profession, keep your hearts.

Mot. 7. *By diligence in keeping our hearts, we should prevent and remove the fatal scandals and stumbling-blocks out of the way of the World.*

Woe to the World (saith Christ) *because of Offences, Mat.* 18. 7. Doth not shame cover your faces? do not your hearts bleed within you to hear the scandalous miscarriages of many lose professors? could you not like *Shem* and *Japhet* go backward with a Garment to cover the shame of many professors? How is that worthy name Blasphemed! *Jam.* 2. 7. 2 *Sam.* 12, 13, 14. The heart of the righteous sadned, *Psal.* 25. 3. *Ezeck.* 36. 20. By this the world is fearfully prejudiced against Christ and Religion, the

bonds of death made fast upon their souls, those that had a general love and liking to the ways of God, startled and quite driven back, and thus Soul-blood is shed: Woe to the World.

Yea, how are the consciences of fallen Professors plunged and even overwhelmed in the deeps of trouble? God inwardly excommunicating their Souls from all comfortable fellowship with himself, and the joys of his Salvation; infinite are the mischiefs that come by the scandalous lives of Professors.

And what is the true cause and reason of all this; but the neglecting of their heart? were our hearts better kept, all this would be prevented; had *David* kept his *Heart*, he had not broken his *Bones*; a neglecting careless heart, must of necessity produce a disorderly scandalous life. I thank God for the freedom and faithfulness of a Reverend Brother in shewing Professors their manifold miscarriages, and from my heart do wish that when their wounds had been throughly searched by that *Probe*, God would be pleased to heal them by this Plaister. O Professors! if ever you would keep Religion sweet, if ever you hope to recover the credit of it in the World, keep your hearts; either keep your hearts, or lose your credit;

Gospel glass.

dit; keep your heart or lose your comforts; keep your hearts, lest ye shed Soul-blood; what words can express the deep concernments, the wonderful consequences of this work; every thing puts a necessity, a solemnity, a beauty upon it.

Mot. 8. *An heart well kept will fit you for any condition God casts you into, or any Service he hath to use you in.*

He that hath learn'd how to keep his heart lowly is fit for prosperity: And he that knows how to use and apply it to Scripture promises and supports, is fit to pass through any adversity: he that can deny the pride and selfishness of his heart, is fit to be employed in any service for God; such a man was *Paul*, he did not only spend his time in preaching to others, in keeping others Vineyards, but he looked to himself, kept his own Vineyard, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. *Lest when I have preached to others, I should have been cast away*: and what an eminent instrument was he for God! he could turn his heart to any work, he could dextrously manage both an adverse and prosperous condition: *I know how to abound, and how to suffer want.* Let the people defie him, it moves him not unless to indignation; Let them stone him, he can bear it; *If a man purge himself from these*, (saith he) 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. *He shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for*

the Masters use, and prepared unto every good work.

First the heart must be purged, and then 'tis prepared for any service of God: when the heart of *Isaiah* was purified which was the thing signified by the touching of his lips with a Coal from the Altar, *Isa.* 6. 7. then he was fit for Gods work; *Here am I send me*, verse 8. A man that hath not learned to keep his heart, put him upon any service for God, and if it be attended with honour, it shall swell up and over-top his Spirit, if with suffering it will examinate and sink him.

Jesus Christ had an instrumental fitness for his Fathers work above all the Servants that ever God enployed; he was zealous in publick work for God, so zealous, that somtimes he forgot to eat Bread, yea, that his friends thought he had been beside himself; but yet he so carried on his publick work, as not to forget his own private communion with God; and therefore you read in *Math.* 14. 23. that when he had been labouring all day, yet after that he went up to a Mountain apart to pray, and was there alone. O let the keepers of the Vineyard look to their own Vineyards! we shall never be so instrumental to the good of others as when we are most diligent about their own Souls.

Mot. 9.

Mot. 9. *If the people of God would more diligently keep their hearts, how exceedingly would the communion of Saints be thereby sweetned.*

How goodly then would be thy tents O *Jacob*, and thy tabernacles O *Israel*; then, as it is propheſied of the *Jews*, *Zech.* 8. 23. *Men would ſay, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is among you.* 'Tis the fellowſhip your ſouls have with the Father and with the Son, that draws out the deſires of others after fellowſhip with you, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. I tell you, if Saints would be perſwaded to take more pains, and ſpend more time about their hearts, there would quickly be ſuch a divine luſtre upon the face of their converſation, that men would account it no ſmall priviledge to be with or near them.

'Tis the pride, paſſion, and earthlineſs of our hearts, that hath ſpoiled Chriſtian fellowſhip; whence is it, that when Chriſtians meet, they are often jarring and contending, but only their unmortified paſſions? whence are there uncharitable cenſures of their *Brethren*, but only from ſelf-ignorance? why are they ſo ridged and unmerciful towards thoſe that are fallen, but becauſe they conſider not themſelves, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks? *Gal.* 6. 1. Why is their diſcourſe ſo frothy and unprofitable when they meet?

is not this from the earthlineſs and vanity of their hearts?

My Brethren, theſe be things that have have ſpoiled Chriſtian fellowſhip, and made it become a dry and ſapleſs thing; ſo that many Chriſtians are even weary of it, and are ready to ſay with the Prophet, *Jer* 9. 2. *O that I had a Cottage in the wilderneſs*, &c. *That I might leave my people and go from them!* and with *David*, Pſal. 120. 6. *My Soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace*: this hath made them long for the grave, that they might go from them that are not their own people, to them that are their own people as the original of that Text imports, 2 *Cor.* 5. 8.

But now if Profeſſors would ſtudy their own hearts more, watch and keep them better, all this would be prevented; and the beauty and glory of Communion again reſtored; they would divide no more, contend no more, cenſure raſhly no more; when their hearts are in tune, their tongues will not jar: how charitable, pitiful, and tender will they be one of another, when every one is daily humbled, under the evil of his own heart; Lord, haſten thoſe much deſired days, and bleſs theſe counſels in order to them.

10. Mot. *Laſtly by this the comforts of the Spirit, and precious influences of all Ordinan-*

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ces would be fixed, and much longer preserved in your souls than they are.

Ah! What would I give that my soul might be preserved in that frame I sometimes find it after an Ordinance! *Aliquando intromittis me Domine in affectum multum inusitatum, introrsus ad quam nescio dulcedinem, &c.* Sometimes, O Lord, (saith one of the Fathers sweetly) thou admittest me into the most inward, unusual and sweet delights, to I know what sweetness, which were it perfected in me, I know not what it would be, or rather what it would not be. But alas! the heart grows careless again and quickly returns, like water removed from the fire to its native coldness; could you but keep those things for ever in your hearts, what Christians would you be? what lives would you live! and how is it that these things remain no longer with us? doubtless it is because we suffer our hearts to take cold again; we should be as careful after an Ordinance or duty to prevent this, as one that comes out of an hot Bath, or great sweat, is of going into the chill Air? we have our hot and cold fits by turns, and what is the reason but our unskilfulness and carelessness in keeping the heart,

'Tis a thousand pities that the Ordinances of God, as to their quickning and comforting effects, should be like those humane

Ordinances the Apostles speaks of, that perish in the using. O then let me say to you as *Job* 15. 11. *Do the consolations of God seem small to you*? Look over these ten special benefits, weigh them in the just Ballance; are they small matters? is it a small matter to have thy weak understanding assisted? thy endangered soul Antidoted, thy sincerity cleared, thy communion with God sweetned, thy saile filled in yrayer? is it a small thing to have the decayed power of Godliness again recovered, all fatal scandal removed, an instrumental fitness to serve Christ obtained, the communion of Saints restored to its primitive Glory, and influences of Ordinances abiding in the Souls of Saints? if these be no common blessings, no small benefits, then surely it is a great duty to keep the heart with all diligence.

III. *Use for Direction.*

THe next use shall be for Direction to some special means for the keeping of the heart; and there besides what hath been hinted in the explication of the duty, *Pag.* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. to which I refer the Reader and to all those directions throughout the whole, appropriated to particular cases and seasons: I shall farther add several other general means of excellent use to this end, and the first is this. 1. Means

1. Means. *Would you thus keep your hearts as hath been perſwaded, then furniſh your hearts richly with the word of God; which is their beſt preſervative againſt ſin.*

Keep the Word, and the Word will keep you: As the firſt receiving of the Word, regenerated your hearts, ſo the keeping of the Word within you, will preſerve your hearts, *Col.* 3. 16. *Let the word of Chriſt dwell richly in you.* Let it dwell, not tarry with you for a night, and let it dwell richly or plentifully; and all that is of it, in its commands, promiſes, threats; in all that is in you, as in your underſtandings, memories, conſciences, affections, and then it will preſerve your hearts, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not ſin againſt thee.* 'Tis the ſlipperineſs of our hearts in reference to the word, that cauſes ſo many ſlips in our lives. Conſcience cannot be urged, or awed with forgotten truths; but keep it in the heart, and it will keep both heart and life uprlght, *Pſal.* 37. 31. *The Law of his God is in his heart, none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide*; or if he do, the World will recover the ſtraying heart again. *Then Peter remembred (the words of Jeſus) and wept bitterly*: we never loſe our hearts till they have firſt loſt the efficacious and powerful impreſſions of the Word.

2. Means.

Means. 2. *Call your hearts frequently to an account, if ever you mean to keep them with God.*

Those that put a stock into the hands of unfaithful and suspitious Servants, will be sure to make short reckonings with them: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Jer.* 17. 9. O 'tis as necessary as sweet, that we and our reins, that is, we and our secret thoughts, confer together every night, *Psal.* 16. 7. We should call our hearts to account every Evening, and say, O my heart! where hast thou been to day? where have thy thoughts wandred to day? what account canst thou give of them? O naughty heart, vain heart, couldst thou not abide by the Fountain of Delights? is there better entertainment with the Creature than with God? the oftener the heart meets with rebukes and checks for wandring, the less 'twil wander; if every vain thought were retracted with a sigh, every excursion of the heart from God with a severe check, it would not dare so boldly and frequently to digress and step aside: Those actions which are committed with reluctancy, are not committed with frequency.

Means 3. *He that will keep his heart, must take heed of plunging himself into such a multiplicity of earthly business, as he cannot manage*

manage without neglecting his main buſineſs.

It cannot be imagined he ſhould keep his heart with God, that hath loſt himſelf in a wood of earthly buſineſs: take heed you do not pinch your Souls by gratifying the immoderate deſires of your fleſh. I wiſh many Chriſtians could truly ſay as a Heathen once did, *I do not give, but only lend my ſelf to my buſineſs.* 'Tis ſaid, *Germanicus* reigned in the *Romans hearts*; *Tiberius* only in their *Provinces*: though the World be in your hands let it not juſtle Chriſt out of your hearts. Seneca.

Take heed Chriſtian leſt thy ſhop ſteal away thy heart from thy Cloſet. God never intended earthly employments for a ſtop, but rather for a ſtep to heavenly ones. O let not *Ariſtippus* the *Heathen* ariſe in judgment againſt thee, who ſaid, *he would rather neglect his means than his mind, His Farm, than his Soul.* If the Ship be over laden, thou muſt caſt ſome over-board: More buſineſs than thou can well manage, is like more meat than thou canſt well digeſt, which will quickly make a ſickly Soul.

Means. 4. *He that means to keep his heart, muſt carefully obſerve its firſt declinings from God, and ſtop it there.*

He that will find his houſe in good repair muſt ſtop every chink as ſoon as diſcovered;

red; and he that will keep his heart, muſt not let a *vain thought* be long neglected. The Serpent of Heart-Apoſtacy is beſt killed in the Egg of a ſmall remiſſion. O, if many poor decayed Chriſtians had looked to their hearts in time, they had never come to that ſad paſs they now are; we may ſay of heart-neglects, as the Apoſtle did of vain bablings, that they encreaſe to more and more ungodlineſs; *Nemo repente ſit turpiſſimus*, little ſins neglected, will quickly become great and maſterleſs. The greateſt *Crocodile* once lay in an Egg; the greateſt Oak was once but an Acron; the firing of a ſmall train of Powder, may blow up all by leading to a greater quantity. Men little think what a proud, vain, wanton, or worldly thought may grow to: Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!

5. Means. *Take heed of loſing the livelineſs and ſweetneſs of your communion with God, leſt thereby your hearts are looſed off from God.*

The heart is an hungry and reſtleſs thing, it will have ſomthing to feed upon: If it enjoy nothing from God, it will hunt for ſomething among the Creatures, and there it often loſes itſelf as well as its end. There is nothing more engages the heart to a conſtancy and evenneſs in walking with God, than the ſweetneſs which it taſts therein;

as

as the *Gauls* when once they had tasted the sweet wine of *Italy*, could never be satisfied till they conquered the Countrey where it grew.

'Tis true, Conscience of duty may keep the heart from neglecting it, but when there is no higher Motive, it drives on deadly, and it is filled with distractions; that which we delight in we are never weary of, as is evident in the motions of the heart to earthly things, where the Wheels being oiled with delight, run nimbly, and have often need of trigging; the motions of the heart upward would be free, if its delight in heavenly things were as great.

6. Means. *Habituate your heart to spiritual meditations, if thou wouldest have it freed from those burdensome diversions.*

By this means you will get a facility and dextrity in heart-work? 'tis pitty those smaller portions of our time betwixt solemn duties, should lye upon our hands, and be rendred useless to us. O learn to save and be goon husbands upon your thoughts: To this purpose a great *Author* speaks, These *Parentheses which happen to come between the more solemn passages (whether business or recreations) of humane life are wont to be lost by most men for want of a due value* Boyls *occasionel Reflects*, Page 9, 10.

for

for them; and even by good men for want of skill to preserve them! For though they do not properly despise them, yet they neglect or lose them, for want of knowing how to rescue them, or what to do with them; but although grains of sand and ashes, be a part but of a despecable smalness, and liable to be scattered and blown away, yet the skilful Artificer by a vehement Fire, brings numbers of these to afford him that noble substance Glass, by whose help, we may both see our selves and our blemishes lively represented, (as in Looking-Glasses) and discern Cœlestial objects (as with Telescopes*) and with the Sun-beams kindle disposed materials (as with Burning-Glasses) so when these little fragments or parcels of time, which if not carefully looked to, would be dissipated and lost, come to be managed by a skilful contemplator, and to be improved by the Cœlestial Fire of Devotions, they may be so ordered, as to afford us both Looking-Glasses to dress our Souls by, and prospectives to discover heavenly wonders, and incentives to inflame our hearts with Zeal.* Thus far he.

Something of that nature I have under hand, for a publick benefit: If God give life to finish, and opportunity to produce it: Certainly this is a great advantage for the keeping the heart with God.

IV. *Use.*

IV. *Use for Consolation.*

I Shall now close the whole with a word or two of Consolation to all diligent and serious Christians that Faithfully and closely ply heart-work; that are groaning and weeping in secret over the hardness pride, earthliness, and vanity of their hearts, that are fearing and trembling over the experienced deceitfulness, and falseness of them, while other vain Professors eyes were abroad, their time and strength eaten up by fruitless disputes and earthly employments, or at best by cold and formal performances of some heartless and empty duties. Poor Christian, I have three things to offer thee, in order to thy support and comfort, and doubtless either of them alone mixed with Faith, is sufficient to comfort thee over all the trouble thou hast with thine own heart.

Comfort 1. *This argues the heart to be upright and honest, whatever thy other gifts and abilities are.*

'Tis uprightness of heart will comfort thee upon a Death-bed, 2 *Kings* 20. 23. *Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, saying, Remember now, O Lord,*

Lord, how have I walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, &c.

I am really of his mind that said, *Si mihi daretur optio, eligerem Christiani rustici sordidissimum & maxime argeste opus præ omnibus victoriis & triumphis Alexandri aut Cæsaris.* Might I have my wish, I would prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustick Christian, before all the victories and trinmphs of *Alexander* or *Cæsar*. Yea, let me add, before all the elaborated duties and excellent gifts of vain Professors; before the tongue of Men and Angels. It will signifie more to my comfort to spend one solitary hour in mourning before the Lord, over heart-corruption, than many hours in a seeming zealous, but really dead performance of common duties, with the greatest enlargements and richest embellishments of parts and gifts.

By this very thing Christ distinguishes the formal and serious Christian, *Matth.* 6. 5. The one is for the Street and Synagogue, for the observation and applause of men, but the other is a Closet-man, he drives on a home trade, a heart-trade: Never be troubled then for the want of those things that a man may have and be eternally damn'd, but rather bless God for

for that which none but the favourites and darlings of Heaven have: many a one is now in Hell that had a better Head than thine, and many a one now in Heaven that complained of as bad a Heart as thine.

2. Com. *Know farther for thy comfort, that God would never leave thee under so many Heart-troubles and burdens, if he intended not thy real benefit thereby.*

Thou art often crying out, Lord why is it thus; why go I mourning all the day, having sorrow in my heart? thus long I ave been exercised with hardness of heart, and to this day have not obtained a broken heart? many years have I been praying, and striving against vain thoughts, yet am I still infested and perplexed with them: O when shall I get a better heart? I have been in Travel, and brought forth but wind, I have obtained no deliverance, neither have the corruptions of my heart fallen, I have brought this heart many times to Prayers, Sermons, Sacraments, expecting and hoping for a cure from them, and still my sore runneth and ceaseth not. Pensive Soul, let this comfort thee, thy God designs thy benefit even by these occasions of thy sad complaints. For (1) Hereby he would let thee see what thy

thy heart by Nature is, and was, and therein take notice how much thou art beholding to free Grace: He leaves the under the exercises of Spirit, that thou mayst lye as with thy face upon the ground, admiring that ever the Lord of Glory should take such a Toad, so vile a Creature into his Bosom Thy base Heart, if it be good for nothing else, yet serves to commend and set off the unsearchable riches of free Grace. (2.) This serves to beat thee off continually from resting, yea, or but glancing upon thine own righteousness, or excellency, the corruption of thy Heart working in all thy duties, makes thee sensible to feel that the Bed is too short, and the covering too narrow. Were it not for those reflections thou hast after duties upon the dulness and distractions of thine heart in them: How apt wouldst thou be to fall in love with, and admire thy own performances, and enlargements! for if notwithstanding these, thou hast much to do with the pride of thy heart; how much more if such humbling and self-abashing considerations were wanting. And lastly, this tends to make thee the more compassionate and tender towards others. Perhaps thou wouldest have little pity for the distresses, and Soul troubles

troubles of others, if thou hadſt leſs experience of thine own.

Com. 3. *To conclude, God will ſhortly put a bleſſed end to all theſe troubles, cares, and watchings.*

The time is coming when thy Heart ſhall be as thou wouldſt have it; when thou ſhalt be diſcharged of all theſe cares, fears, and Sorrows, and never cry out, O my hard, my proud, my vain, my earthly heart any more; when all darkneſs ſhall be baniſhed from thine underſtanding, and thou ſhalt clearly diſcover all Truths in God, That Cryſtial Ocean of Truth; when all vanity ſhall be purged perfectly out of thy thoughts, and they be everlaſtingly, raviſhingly, and delightfully entertained and exerciſed upon that ſupream goodneſs, and infinite excellency of God; from whence they ſhall never ſtart any more like a broken Bow. And as for thy Pride, Paſſion, Earthlineſs, and all other the matters of thy complaint and trouble, it ſhall be ſaid of them as of the *Ægyptians to Iſrael, Stand ſtill and ſee the Salvation of God.* Theſe corruptions thou ſeeſt to day, henceforth thou ſhalt ſee them no more for ever; when thou ſhalt lay down thy weapons of prayers, tears, and groans, and put on the Armour of Light, not to fight but to triumph in.

Lord

Lord when shall this blessed day come? How long, how long! Holy and True! My Soul waireth for thee. Come my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of *Bether*, *Amen*.

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FINIS.